MIGHT·HAVE·BEEN

JOSEPH·PARKER

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MIGHT ❧ HAVE ❧ BEEN

Some Life Notes

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D. D.

❧ ❧ ❧

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TO

SIR WEMYSS REID

In Appreciation of the Spirit and Genius
which have marked
His Brilliant Professional Career

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EXPLANATORY.

I HAVE long desired to invent something, and at last I have succeeded. I have invented and patented the Dreamograph! This book will show how it works. In all my efforts I have been moved by an overmastering wish that Providence had permitted us to take a trial-trip over our life-course before we had begun it in solemn and final deeds. At times it has seemed hard that we should start at once for the judgment-seat—start through an unknown land, traverse it once for all, without being permitted to retrace a single mile of the urgent journey. There is no gate that opens upon yesterday! Even if we change the figure, we do not alter the substantial fact. Is life a kind of writing? The ink is indelible. Is life an experiment? The experiment is solitary and final. Is life a school? The master forbids the use of indiarubber.

Suppose Robert Burns had been allowed to take a trial-trip over the first five-and-twenty years, would he have died at thirty-seven? The whole scheme of life is so painfully severe! The mistake is made so suddenly, yet the making of it is irrevocable. Even if you can draw a nail, you leave a wound in the wood. You cannot recall the faintest sigh. The economy within which life is set is infinitely sensitive. It cannot forgive a false note in music. It writhes in sight of a misblended colour.

It counts exaggeration a blasphemy against harmony and proportion. Thus there is a clear sense in which all life is religious, whether we pray upward or downward. Ay, upward or downward, pray we must. So long as there is Need there must be Prayer. This is not a question to be settled by academic experts ; it is settled from before the foundation of the world. Within this religiously sensitive economy we must evolve and discipline our little life—a life-span long—a breath carried away by the wind ! Surely it cannot be that it is only once for all, a runner's brief fore-start before he takes the leap of destiny. We must have missed something in our bungling estimate ; there must be Mercy where there is so much Sorrow. In all the rush and tumult and tragedy and deathliness of life, I hear a plash of great soft tears, falling from the kind heavens. I feel—I know—I am sure beyond doubt, that at the heart of things stands a Pity infinite and redeeming.

I have in this book looked at life as it *might have been*, for who knows that the potential is not God's way of interpreting the indicative and actual ? How if in us God often sees the better self of Intention towering over the poor self of Execution ? My Dreamograph brings me better views of life than are brought by croaking pessimists, or by the yellow dyspeptics who think it pious to be melancholy. It was through the Dreamograph that I took part in the greatest meeting since fiery Pentecost. It was in a private room at Addington.

The Archbishop had invited a number of my brethren to meet him. In the course of a little address, Dr. Tait said, "I should be astonished if there were any who really held that, provided a man is a Nonconformist or a Roman Catholic, he might on account of his separation from our own Church almost as well be an Atheist or a Mohammedan."

In an instant we were softened into a most gracious condition of heart. All the angry past was forgotten. A great summer sky made us glad with a light above the brightness of the sun. And the dear Archbishop's face, can we ever forget it? The evening shadows were thickening upon the noble head; the voice had lost its solemn resonance; great grief-lines had ploughed their furrows on a brow massive and delicate in its manifold significance, whilst the pensive eyes seemed to have been looking far down the valley where the sleepers wake not. It was a great sight. Before that vision no man could be flippant. Verily we were face to face with a most reverend Father in God. To our surprise, the Primate called for bread and wine which he gave us as the Body and Blood of our common Redeemer. Then his Grace requested one of the Nonconformist ministers to pray. But who could find words? My friend could not, though he got as far as, "Loving Father in heaven, we thank Thee——" and his voice gave way. And strong men, loud and clamant in controversy, bowed their heads in a deeper and tenderer reverence. The power of God was upon us, and the tabernacle-cloud overshadowed us. No man spake unto his neighbour, but the grip of the hand was a sacrament.

So things Might have been. What we have missed of festival and music and mirth of heaven! We have been self-impoverished. My Dreamograph shows me a time when alienated men will be more drawn together, and will see one another in a clearer light; then marvellous recognitions will take effect, and latent kinships will be realised through all the heat and rage of controversy. We are akin. In the larger heredity we are cleansed by the One Baptism. We shall one day belong to the holy sect of Brotherhood. It is in this belief that I have written my potential history, and it is in this spirit that my potential history must be read if it is to be understood. If I have spoken in parables, who will rebuke me? If I have resorted to mockery, what son of Elijah will discredit the instrument? If I have been playful and ironical, who will insist that a large vein of our nature should be cast out as worthless? Through all my wanderings I shall come back to my wife's creed, which I here with her consent set down in her own words:

"Love is a joy,
Love is a bliss,
Love in its pain
Is happiness.
Love is a blossom,
A bud, a flower;
All things beautiful
Are its dower.
Its very cross
Is a sign Divine
Of love eternal
Without decline:
In spite of sin,
And sorrow, and curse,
Love is the Soul
Of the universe."

MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

NOTE I.

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to save something from the wreck of their yesterdays, it seemed good to me also to look back upon my public life, and to make a note or two of its ups and downs. The potential mood has been a great help to me, eking out in quite a liberal way the possibilities of the austere and more responsible indicative, and so giving fancy a chance to humour a whim or two. I have no fear in coming thus before my readers, because I know that wise men will at once see where and how the indicative and the potential play their several parts.

Tuesday.—Stanley called on me to-day. I call him "Stanley," treating him as a Greek verb whose soul you get at by nipping off the tail and nipping off the head and reducing it to a stem. His full name is the Very Rev. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Dean of Westminster. But it pleases me as a dependent Independent minister to shorten him into

"Stanley." It seems by that sign that we breakfast together twice a week at his expense. I never call him Stanley to his face, but behind his back, don't I! When I am talking to Independent ministers even more dependent than I am, I deafen them with, "I said to Stanley," and "Stanley said to me," and "Stanley roared when I told him that story"—fancy Arthur "roaring"!—and "Stanley invited me to go with him." Then they look at me with awe, and whisper to one another, "He knows Dean Stanley."

To-day the little body, barely hiding one of the largest souls God ever made, called on me, and shed peace on me and my house. He was lovably simple. He looked up to me (I am two inches taller) and asked me if we sang hymns at the City Temple. I thought he was joking—a Dean joking!—but he was not, so I said "Yes," and he seemed satisfied. Then he took a look round my bookshelves, and I showed him his own "Memorials of Westminster Abbey," and he sweetly answered: "My dear Parker, why don't you come over?" And I said: "Where to?" And he smilingly replied: "To the Church." I said I was already there, and he looked aghast. "In the Church of England?" said he. And I answered: "You said nothing about the Church of England; you said 'the Church,' and of the Church I am not only a minister, I am a bishop!"

Then the Dean: "But I want you to come over to the Church of England."

"But, my dear Dean, I have convictions."

"Certainly," said he; "bring them with you, by all means."

"But they don't agree with yours."

"Very good; bring them, stick to them. I ask you to come into a National Church, which, being national, includes all classes, grades, degrees, and qualities."

"But how could we agree?"

"Show me," said he, "what money you have in your pocket."

I took out all I had and showed it to the soft, grey-eyed, long-nosed little man, and he said:

"How can that half-crown agree with that three-penny-piece, and that shilling have any patience with that sixpence? And isn't that half-sovereign mixed up with the silver? However can it consent to be in such inferior company, eh?"

I saw the point, and avoided it—the best thing to do with every point.

He continued: "The nation doesn't agree in politics; why should it agree in ecclesiastics? Salisbury would kick Gladstone into a dustbin, and Gladstone would sell Salisbury for a pinch of snuff, yet they belong to the same nation, and assure the constituencies, when swollen with beef and beer, that the eternal salvation of England depends upon their avoiding one of them. The Church represents patriotism, not party."

We got along so nicely, Stanley and I. We were like chums. We might have been at Eton together, snoring in semi-detached cubicles. At the next ministers' meeting wouldn't they hear of it! "And," said I, mutely addressing myself, "won't Belman gnash his artificial teeth when he hears that Stanley has been in my house!" Bouncer (long deceased, and happily forgotten) was the most genial man when he was A1, but when he was only B2 I could believe in the fall of Adam and in anything sour.

In the afternoon two "brethren" called. Of course, I didn't mention Stanley. Didn't I? Ask the "brethren." I didn't say he had called me Parker. Didn't I? I didn't describe his personality, eh? Nothing about his soft, kind voice; nothing about his being just above the height of Zaccheus; nothing about that long, eager, inquiring nose that could turn over the leaves of a library by way of recreation, eh? I never referred to these things, did I? Ask the "brethren."

Friday, 31*st*.—Had a note from Stanley to-day in reply to a letter of mine. As he was so very friendly and so gloriously "national," I asked if he would preach in the City Temple. Not a soul in the house could read the note. My Jim said he could read it if I would buy him a microscope, and get him a fortnight's holiday. My third son declared it was written backwards, and that it should be read through a looking-glass. Rebecca, my eldest girl, destitute of humour and deeply domestic, said if I inked a robin's feet and led the little creature over a sheet of paper it would pass as a note from Dean Stanley. Showed the note to two brethren, and asked them point-blank whether on the strength of that note I could advertise the Dean to preach in the City Temple. One was doubtful. The other said if the case was his own he would announce the Dean to preach on the authority of that note, and would give a facsimile of the same, and no living soul would be able to reproach me. We all agreed that it was a literary hand, and that it fairly represented the mind of the writer in some of its moods. I showed it to my deacons, and they appointed a sub-committee to render the scribble into English, but by the end of six months every man on the sub was in his grave. I still think the note has a meaning, but it is beyond me. Never mind. I can say I've had a letter from "Stanley," and that will stun my friends and make them look up to me.

Saturday, 4*th*.—Lucky day. Met Stanley in the Strand. The little creature was out for an airing. I accosted him, and brought him out of cloudland into the common street. Showed him the note, and asked him to read it to me. He smiled at my stupidity. Then he took the note, looked at it, held it upside down, and asked me what I had written to him about, and perhaps the subject would recall his memory. "But, my dear fellow," said I, quite forgetting myself and treating him like one of my "brethren," "it is your own handwriting; surely you can read what you have written?" He said he could not. I said: "Is it a free railway pass?"

He said: "It might pass for one." "Then," said I, "will you preach for me any Thursday morning in the City Temple?" He hesitated. He began. He fell back. His eyelids quivered. Then he said: "When the wind is blowing east and west, and Mars is in conjunction with Venus, and it has been really ascertained whether there is a North Pole, and what is the precise use of such an institution, and whether Lactantius was right in denying the earth's rotundity, or Augustine was right in denying the Antipodes, whilst admitting the rotundity, he would consider my request in its various bearings." The answer has so confused me, that I am sure it will be impossible for me to preach to-morrow.

Stanley called last night. He asked me on what terms the Dissenters would come over, and I told him. The terms are: a dead conscience, a blind reason, a paralysed will. He seemed puzzled.

"The terms cannot be changed," said I; "there they are."

"But don't you feel as A. K. H. B. does? He wants to come over."

"By all means let him do so."

"He says if Presbyterianism was not the law of Scotland, he would be an Anglican."

"Well, so be it. I never understood that the difference was one of law. I thought it was an infinite difference of doctrine and ritual. I was not aware that Presbyterianism approved of sacerdotalism, baptismal regeneration, auricular confession, and priestly absolution."

"But he is struck with the gentlemanliness of Anglicanism; he adores its refinement, its culture, its polish, its high breeding."

"Good things," said I, "but, personally, I cannot afford the price."

I do like a man to be faithful to his convictions. I respect an honest Pope, a sincere Archbishop, and a convinced Nonconformist, but I don't see how any man can be all three at the same time.

Is it wrong to hate a preacher who has a bigger congregation than I have? Hate is perhaps a strong word. I had better speak thus of him: "You know he was never trained for the ministry"; "He caters for the gods"; "He keeps all his goods for the shop-window"; "There is really nothing in his sermons, you know." Of course, I must pull him down in some way; I owe it to myself to do that. If an author sells fourteen books where I only sell eleven, I speak of that immense and incorrigible ass, the public; not a word do I say against the author; personalities are vulgar.

NOTE II.

DELANE, the mighty spirit of the *Times*, called on me on the soothing plea that he saw in me a journalistic genius. I respected him for it. I expected it. He was very genial.

"But," said I, "you must remember that I have had no training in journalism."

"Nor I," said he, "except by downright hard work as reporter. I wanted to be a Bob Sawyer, for I have an eye for joints, but somehow I got tumbled into journalism, and the rest came by hard work."

"But the *Times* is such a high and mighty paper. What can I do?"

"You can begin low."

"I have written a few snarling paragraphs in the *Unchristian Anvil*, but that's very different from writing for the leading journal of Europe."

"Very," said he; "and that leads me to say that, if you work in our leading columns, you will have to keep your Dissent out of view."

"Oh!"

"Certainly. One stain of Dissent in our leading columns would destroy the *Times*."

"Then what could I do?"

"You could warn the bishops; you could shake a forefinger at them; and you could grandly counsel the Dissenters to mind what they are about if they wish to be influential in shaping the ecclesiastical destiny of this unhappy country."

"Yes."

"There's a field for you," said the buoyant Delane. "Here's a note I sent to Dallas—a man who keeps me in continual hot water. I wrote this on the back of an envelope, and he follows the line without caring a button for the argument. Probably he dropped an oath or two on the paper which received his pious observations:

> "'Caution Tait about Mackonochie. Tell him that the country cannot do with much more priest. Smash the idea of "ghostly father." Blow out all altar lights. Snub Brett's impudence, and that will please Tait. Have a fling at that hateful little prig, the *Record*.'

"That's all Dallas had to go on, and he wrote an article which convulsed both Houses of Convocation. Now, my dear Parker, that's what I want you to do. My notion is that a Dissenter, by keeping in the dark, can write many things with a flavour in them. Think of it."

"But the *Times* wants such fine writing."

"Pooh! pooh! not a bit of it. The *Times* hates fine writing; it wants pure English, terseness, dignity, and a subtle kind of music. You would be surprised how few men have journalistic ability. Froude had not, nor Kingsley, nor Maurice; they were too formal, too stiff, too long in beginning. I am on the outlook for men who begin at the very first sentence. You can do that."

I respected him for the remark, and I reported it to my wife.

"Isn't the *Times* a shifty, crafty, temporising paper?"

"No; the *Times* is a shrewd and honest interpreter of what is going on. It represents the currents of varying opinion. If it is one thing to-day and another to-morrow, it is simply because the age is one thing to-day and another to-morrow. There is an honest transition as well as an honest constancy."

"Well, what shall I write about?"

"Take a turn at the Mormons, the faddists, the bigots, or anything along that line. Laugh at the vegetarians, and show them that vegetables themselves are not vegetarians, but about the biggest carnivora going. Don't preach. Snub, warn, laugh, mock, and instruct, but keep your inner consciousness quiet; we don't want it."

I liked the great man immensely; he seemed to take in everything at a glance.

"Come down to Ascot," said he, "and spend a week end with me."

"You forget," said I, "that the week end is the busiest time for preachers."

"Oh yes; that is so. Still, a sniff of the pine air of Ascot would do even your theology no harm."

As soon as Delane had gone, I went out for a walk, and whom should I meet but the vicar of this parish! I inwardly drew myself up, and said: "How little that man knows that I may one day snub a bishop, and even warn the lower House of Convocation! And think of me dining with the archdeacons and a tableful of clerics, and of them all smarting under the nettle-rhetoric of a Dissenting critic, and never dreaming that the nettle is at the table! What a charm this gives to life! To deny a Providence would be worse than absurd."

I have thought of a leader on Agnosticism. Splendid theme! My position will be that, in going from the *Unknowable*, the agnostics have gone to the *Contemptible*, and I will show in a slashing paragraph that some so-called believers are little better than agnostics—Dean Stanley, for example, whose puny faith is always sitting in a draught and catching cold. I'll be down on them! Because little Huxley does not know there is a God, therefore no other person can possibly know. And that red-herring Colenso, sneering at the Pentateuch, and doing arithmetical sums in the creases of his own apron. Won't I! For such a time as this have I come to the kingdom. I'll ask Delane to call again and consider a syllabus of spicy topics.

A letter just received from the Bishop of Manchester has discouraged me. Here let me say that every letter appearing in these notes is genuine—that is to say, I give each letter exactly as my correspondent wrote it. Here is Bishop Fraser's:

"Bishop's Court.
"Manchester.

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"The condition of my engagement-book is such all through the months of October and November that I am not likely to have even a day to spare for London.

"And even had it been otherwise, I should have felt a difficulty in complying with your request. I have never been able to see with my dear friend, the Dean of Westminster, the advantage in the direction of broader and more Catholic, but at the same time definite, religious thought, gained by an interchange of pulpits; and the *genius loci* always exercises a powerful influence over me. Besides, as a bishop, I should, perhaps, embarrass the minds of multitudes of my own people without (so far as I can see) any counterbalancing gain. No, my dear sir; I wish you well with all my heart in any enterprise to deepen the springs of Christian life, which always issue in a larger flow of Christian charity; but for myself I must be content to work, according to what, perhaps, may seem to you my dim lights, within my own lines.

"Yours most faithfully in Christ,
"J. Manchester."

Well, so be it. The Bishop was a glorious man, true through and through, and big and healthy. This is his view, and it is the view of an honest man. I am bound to say that the bishops with whom I have been honoured to converse, and whom I have known indirectly, have always impressed me as sincere and high-minded men, deeply intent on the best interests of their Church. Nor have they been slow to recognise the Christian service of Nonconformists. It is a mistake to suppose that they are ignorant of Dissenting policy and action. What they are ignorant of is the real standpoint of the Dissenting mind. They have never, to my knowledge, done justice to the religious standpoint of the Dissenter. They have seen everything from the point of the State, and nothing from the point of the doctrine, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The longer I live the more clearly I see that instead of a State Church we should have a Church State.

We must beware, as I have said, lest in giving up the Unknowable we prostrate ourselves before the Contemptible. Nothing that is measurable is really big. A man with a barrow could wheel the Andes into the sea. As for the stars, give him time enough and a prodigal will spend them all as if they were sovereigns, and die in the poorhouse of empty space.

I have noticed in passing through many landscapes that there are forests as well as gardens. People forget this. There are ploughed lands, and lands unploughed but by the lightning. There are people who have been brought up on the first four rules of arithmetic, and people who never learned letters. Why do we forget these facts, and so make room for envy and jealousy and all uncharitableness? The table is made out of the oak, and is decorated by the geranium, yet both oak and geranium grow in the Lord's estate.

NOTE III.

I HAVE seen Dr. Lightfoot, Bishop of Durham, and I am the better for it. I can never forget how the great man received his appointment to Durham. Laying his hand upon the head of his chaplain, he said: "Pray for me, my child." It was very affecting. It was no use; I could not keep back the tears. It was a long time before his old housekeeper could get used to the new title, "My lord." It had always been Mr. Lightfoot, or Canon Lightfoot, or Dr. Lightfoot. But "my lord!" No, she could not; and yet she wanted to. At last she managed it. The Bishop was leaving his house. The rain came down in floods. Only one four-wheeler could be had. There it stood at the door. Cabby was covered with a kind of tarpaulin cloak and a sou'-wester, down which the rain ran in spouts. Not a living soul could be seen. It was as if London were dead, and the hearse was at the door. When the Bishop came downstairs the housekeeper opened the front-door, and pointing to the cab, she said, with some majesty, "Your carriage, my lord!" It was too much for Lightfoot. He turned right round, ran upstairs, and literally screamed with laughter. By that sign I knew he was verily a father in God.

But at Auckland Castle the great Bishop was seen to the best advantage. What a face he had! Some said it was the face of an ox; some that of an affectionate dog, Newfoundland or setter, when he wants to tell you how much he loves you. It was certainly a rough face, but rough like a rock that only gunpowder could rend, and yet with tiny flowers growing in its seams and fissures. No lady graced the Bishop's table. Yet the lady was hardly missed, there was so much soft, sweet womanliness about the rugged Bishop himself. I expected that the talk would be either in Syriac or in Chinese, and that it would turn upon the Epicurean and Stoic philosophies, or the forged correspondence of Paul and Seneca, or at least that my Dissenting vulgarity would be shamed down to a conflagration by overwhelming evidence and illustration of the extension of Episcopacy throughout pro-consular Asia; and to my amazement the words I most distinctly remember are "cocoa," "toast," and "grilled chicken." It was an immense relief. Books were certainly spoken of. Pope Leo was described as "a sceptic," and another "Joseph Dunelm" was spoken of with reverence. Happily the Bishop did not examine me in the other Joseph's "Analogy."

Dear Bishop Lightfoot! There is not a Nonconformist minister in England who does not hold the name in loving honour.

By the way, I had a letter from another bishop last week. The letter is from a man called Spurgeon. Ever hear of him? Letters like the following let us see a long way into the depths of a truly great heart. Mr. Spurgeon was full of music and full of love, and his charity flowed like a river. The son who occupies his pulpit is worthy of him, and richly deserving of honour. Here is the prized letter:

"MENTONE,
"*December* 5.

"DEAR DR. PARKER,

"Your cheering note reached me when I was crushed with pain. As soon as I can hold a pen I sit down to thank you for this spontaneous act of brotherly kindness. This is better than a hundred homilies upon 'Church unity.' In the name of the orphans I thank you and the audience at the City Temple; and for my own part I am a personal debtor to yourself. Why should you think thus kindly of me? Surely in the hour of my bitter sorrow you were moved to minister unto your fellow-servant, and may the Lord do so to you and more also in the day when you also have to pine in secret. Far off from you be such days and nights as those with which I am abundantly familiar; but should they ever cast a shadow over you even for a brief season, may my Lord and yours raise up to you friends who will deal with you as you have done unto me. The peace of God abide with you.

"Yours most gratefully,
"C. H. SPURGEON."

How full of pain, yet how full of grace and hope!

Never was severer affliction borne with nobler fortitude. Let me lay this sprig of rosemary on his honoured grave.

I am learning more and more to let things take care of themselves. No; that is wrong. I am learning to escape the atheism of anxiety.

I have written to Delane to the effect that I have already got two words which I think would work up well into a trenchant leader: the two precious words are, "nefarious" and "perfidious." I am digging down to their etymology in the hope of finding something really good. I shall be surprised if I have not struck oil. I named these words to my wife in high glee, and she simply curled the corners of her mouth, and told me to leave out money enough for the week's washing. I felt degraded.

Can I ever forgive myself? I feel bad. My father-in-law came to see us last week in a state of sad depression. I never saw him so run down. "Come," said I, in my cheeriest week-day tone, "you want a good laugh—a good, big, hearty, side-shaking laugh; so you must see Toole next Saturday morning (I am only a matinée man); that will destroy the hideous blues." So we went. Behold! Mr. Toole, the sweetest old heart that ever amused the public, was playing Caleb Plummer! There he was with his old sack on, painting wooden horses, talking to and deceiving his lovely blind daughter, and for two hours we were soaked in tears. We dare not look at each other. We felt we were mutual murderers. At last I said, between two big slobbering sobs, "My dear, we brought your father to enjoy a laugh." This was too much for us, so we wallowed in pathos and used up all our pocket cambric, my wife asking me in a mysterious whisper if I had "another." When Mr. Toole came to see me after a Sunday evening service, I told him of this incident, and thanked him for the tears that had worked a great mystery of relief in a heart that was sad and hopeless.

Talking of Mr. Toole, I must tell of a kindness he did me. My City Temple friends were just about to celebrate our silver wedding. Mr. Toole saw the announcement, and took occasion, when we had a cup of tea in his private room, to hand my wife a cheque for three guineas, to be added to the testimonial fund. I knew nothing of the cheque; it was passed over when my back was turned for a moment. When I did hear of it on getting home, I wrote Mr. Toole a note of thanks, and told him that I had crossed the cheque "payable at the Bank of Love," and gummed it into my *Study Bible*. There it will remain for ever. I often look at it, and think gratefully of my distinguished friend.

But does Mr. Toole go to church? Certainly. No more reverent man ever knelt at the holy altar. He has known pain that tears the heart, and loss that makes even gold but a mocking poverty, and he knows, without whine or cant, how to find the Invisible and Pitying Father.

I early foresaw a difficulty in my family life, and I now feel all the pain of it. I refer to my eldest son, born, unfortunately, with only one eye, but the other a sharp un. I thought I saw the boy's special future in that gleaming organ. It was astonishing how much the child seemed to see with the eye that was not open. Even his mother could hide nothing from him, though she has successfully hidden things from me for nearly half a century. No sooner did we get the one-eyed child, four years old, safely tucked and buckled into his baby-chair at luncheon than the dazzling eye eagerly scanned the frugal table, and then, in a voice which must have filled the whole of his inside, and have even then been pinched for room, he said, pointing to the things as he did so: "I'll ha' some o' lat, and some o' lat, and some o' lat, and nen some marmalade." He terrified both his parents, giving them the impression that if they refused him anything he would undoubtedly lose the sight of the other eye. He had such an eye for detail. The gardener said "it was somethink awful," and the nurse weepingly assured my wife that "it was the terror" of her fitful sleep. The nurse said she always anxiously looked to see which eye was uppermost when baby woke—if the blind one, the day might be happy; if the other one, then squalls! When baby came into the room, it was the eye we saw. My wonder was what we should make of the child. I pondered the question silently for years. The boy, now a young man, decided the inquiry by telling us that he had consulted a phrenologist, and had been advised that he was clearly intended by Providence to be a detective! For three days my wife and I could not speak to each other. She looked at me and broke down; I looked at her and broke down; we both looked at Davie and broke down. When I had calmed down a little, Davie came into my study, and told me that my preaching had done it all. He then quoted some of my recent texts: "Be sure your sin will find you out"; "The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth"; "Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished"; and as he quoted the texts his eye seemed to fasten itself on whole gangs of villains. He would "run them down"; he would "turn up their little game;" he would "put them in grappling irons"; he would "put a pinch o' salt on their tails"—in short, his language was so brutal, so gloatingly brutal, that I never had the heart to tell his mother what it was. Davie was always looking through keyholes or listening for footsteps, and he once winked at me so knowingly as to make himself momentarily blind. Davie actually got himself appointed as an assistant detective, and then his pride was insufferable. He often looked as if he was about to arrest both his mother and me. The gardener little knew, when he was taking a pipe on the sly, or tucking a cauliflower into his top-coat, that Davie was watching him from the top branch of an apple-tree. Nor was the cook aware that when she gave the gardener (a single man, though not without encumbrance) two ounces of tea and a tallow-candle Davie was watching her through a very small hole in the larder window. But the fullness of the cup was not yet. Davie had a professional case on hand, as we inferred from the pained expression of his face. His eye was alight night and day.

Davie's business was to run down a long-legged villain who had embezzled the money of a charity. Davie had an irrational and implacable antipathy to long legs. He saw fraud in both of them. At length he fixed his eye on a very long pair, and tracked the suspected villain to Exeter Hall. Davie sat down in front of the platform, and fixed his eye on the chairman. He then felt he was on the right scent. The chairman looked a villain. Falsification of accounts was written all over his face. Davie heard the word "embezzlement" in every tone of the chairman's voice. During the opening prayer the chairman craftily surveyed the audience through his outspread fingers, a fact which did not escape the piercing eye of Davie. "Now," said Davie, "how shall I land my trout? Shall I challenge this thief in the hearing of a public meeting? Shall I tap him on the shoulder as he leaves the hall?" How his course might have been determined there is no saying, for, to the infinite consternation of the meeting, the chairman was seized with an apoplectic fit, and was removed by friendly hands to the ante-room, to which retreat he was followed by my one-eyed son. Davie could not be deceived; he saw through the whole trick. "Evidently," said he, "the chairman knew that my eye was upon him; I thought he did, and he fell into this fit to get out of my hands." Everybody else was full of sympathy; Davie was full of suspicion. That is the difference between a layman and a professional. Whilst the people were crowding round the chairman a long-legged man picked Davie's pocket, and would have got clean off but for the adroitness of a City missionary from the district of Seven Dials, a very short-legged man, deeply marked with the smallpox, whom Davie, owing to the excitement of the moment, gave into custody, and allowed the long-legged man to make good his escape.

Davie kept his eye—his only eye—upon the slowly-recovering chairman, inquiring in the meantime of the officials of the meeting his precise name and address, which he found to be the Right Reverend Bishop Cathero, who was on his first visit to this country. Davie had been deceived by the long legs. "How long do you think a man's legs ought to be, President Lincoln?" "Wal," said the great Abraham, "I have not considered the subject very much, but, speaking gin'rally, I should say a man's legs ought to be long enough to stretch from his body right away down to the ground."

NOTE IV.

BINNEY is very mad about Dickens's account of Hone's funeral. Binney was the officiating minister. See the full account in Forster's "Life of Dickens." I had read Mr. Binney's repudiation of Dickens's account, and asked if I might reprint his article. Here is his answer:

> "DEAR DR. PARKER,
>
> "Do what you please with my article on Dickens. Of course, I wish it to be known, not for my own sake, but as a protest against the immorality of novelists in always making out that every Dissenting minister is a 'Stiggins' or a 'Chadband.' Forster expresses regret to me, but 'does not know what to do.' Why, at any rate, he can omit the story, but to *explain* will be to injure his idol.
>
> "I had a note from Dean Stanley last night, who had seen my paper, and remembers reading the story in Field. He expresses his fear that 'there is a vein of inaccuracy running through Dickens when he refers to facts, as there was an element of exaggeration in his fiction'; but the mild word 'inaccuracy' ought not to mean misrepresentations amounting to *lies*.

"My love to your wife, who, I hope, will read Dickens with less admiration in future.

"Yours fraternally,

"T. Binney.

"*January* 9, 1872."

But she does not, nor do I. Dickens saw things within things. The logician can never understand the novelist. Dickens was not writing an affidavit; he was telling a story in a story-teller's way. I sympathise with Mr. Binney, too, for a more upright and truth-loving man never lived. He was the very soul of honour, but even logical Mr. Binney had his moments of rhetorical fever, as when he said in public: "The Church of England has damned more souls than it ever saved." Some clergymen said that was not an "inaccuracy"; it was a "lie." But both parties may have been prejudiced.

A note from Delane. He says that "nefarious" and "perfidious" would admirably suit the columns of the *Evening Earthquake*, but he dare not accept them for the *Times*. He says he would prefer "nevertheless" and "notwithstanding" as more flexible and less aggressive, and on the whole, more non-committal. "Excuse me, my boy," he said, quite friendly like and chummy—a rare manner with his majesty—"I have seen the ups and downs of thirteen Administrations. From Melbourne to Gladstone I have seen how the ball rolls, and I advise you to avoid 'nefarious' and 'perfidious' as quotable words. All quotable words are dangerous."

Good. If I do send the article to the *Evening Earthquake*, I'll take care to have the money before I part with the gem. The *Earthquake* is not a paper to take regularly; once a month will be enough. You soon get tired of earthquake even in conversation. I always avoid a very distinguished man, because he is so remarkably earthquaky. Once a quarter is enough.

I have been arranging for a conference between Churchmen and Dissenters on the question of Disestablishment. I asked John Bright to attend. Here is his reply:

"HYDE PARK,
"*February* 22, 1876.

"DEAR SIR,

"I cannot accept your invitation. I am compelled to avoid all public meetings, except such as are connected with my own special duty as the representative of a large constituency.

"I have had to send this answer to a hundred requests and invitations, and must send it to you. I do not think Churchmen and Nonconformists can publicly consider the Church question with much chance of advantage. We are, I fear, all too much prejudiced to give a fair consideration to the arguments opposed to us, or we think what our opponents say is no argument at all.

"I shall be anxious to learn the result of your proposed conference, and shall be glad if it tends to any good in relation to what, I suspect, is to be for many years a great subject of contention in this kingdom.

"I thank you for the complimentary proposition you have made to me, and am,

"Very sincerely yours,
"JOHN BRIGHT."

Funny logic. Why, it would dissolve the House of Commons, and make a difference even to the House of Lords.

My notion is that Churchmen and Dissenters should meet more and more, and not regard each other as curiosities. The other day I met the Bishop of Dover, and found him beautifully human. He knew I was a Dissenter, yet, though we were dining, he did not stick anything into me, and he showed no sign whatever of insecurity in my presence. I thought him very confiding. When I told him that I, too, was a bishop, he asked the waiter to give him a glass of potass; but he said nothing to me. There is an eloquent silence.

Dined at a great house the other night, and sat next a woman who had the head of a horse. I was terrified. I believe I turned white. Certainly I felt white and ashy. By-and-by she talked. Then her face changed. She talked more, and her soul awoke within her. The eyes glowed. The voice rounded. The horse vanished. It was George Eliot. I do so wish she had never married the second man. Far be it from me to say a word against the man personally, but I wish they had kept out of each other's way. It is dangerous work spending a winter together reading Dante.

The *Evening Earthquake* has asked for an article. I began it in these soothing terms: "What is a Tory? Can any one define that nefarious and perfidious beast?" But my wife would not let me send it. She said it looked as if it was prejudiced. She said I had better keep it for a theological article; it was too strong for politics. I like her idea. I might begin thus: "What is an Agnostic? Can any one define that nefarious and perfidious abortion of a pallid and chicken-hearted civilisation?" Nobody could charge that with prejudice. Yet it would look earnest, and call upon my eloquent pen the attention of less ill-mannered journals than the *Evening Earthquake*. Of course, I don't really mean what I say in the article; it is merely a rhetorical and tumid expression of one aspect of my neglected conscience. It is myself at my washiest, but as it would not be signed, my sensitiveness would be spared. Conscience is a very good word. I think more might be made of it. Collect a bag of prejudices and call it conscience, and there you are.

December 15.—A publisher called on me to-day, and we had some interesting talk. He has devised a new scheme. The new scheme is to pay authors something, even if it's only a trifle. This publisher is a brother who writes tracts on holiness. I told him I would lay his scheme before Besant, but he threw up his arms, and exclaimed: "For Heaven's sake, don't do that!" I asked him why not? And he said: "Because that villain denounces secret profits, and insists upon seeing the publisher's accounts, and would willingly see the publisher's family go into the workhouse." I assured him that Walter Besant wanted nothing but what was fair and straightforward. It was of no use. He left me a tract on "Consecration," and two leaflets on the "Second Coming," and said things would be better as soon as there was a change of Government.

The Rev. Henry White was minister of the Savoy Chapel. He often attended my Thursday morning service, then held in Albion Chapel during the erection of the City Temple. I gave him a volume of my sermons, and to my great delight I received the following letter from his grateful pen:

'ALBERGO DEL PARCO,
"LUGANO,
"NORTH ITALY,
"*October* 15.

"MY DEAR DR. PARKER,

"I fully meant to have acknowledged your kind, welcome and generous gift before you left for America, but I waited in hope of another Thursday morning at Albion Chapel, and when I went one hapless Thursday you were gone. . . . As I am now resting here, I take the opportunity to send for your welcome on your return my most fervent thanks for your kind thought of me, and for giving that thought its most welcome and happy expression. I have read alone, and to others, your sermons with great pleasure and with equal profit.

"They are most suggestive and helpful. I only regret that it has not seemed good to you to include the matchless sermon which I heard upon Jonah.

"I hope that you will do me the honour to fulfil your promise of a visit to me when you have settled down again in London.

"Yours most sincerely,
"HENRY WHITE."

This letter is so frank and so cordial that I asked Mr. White to preach for me some Thursday morning, and he wrote expressing his deep regret that his "ecclesiastical conscience" would not allow him to accept my invitation. Yes, conscience is a downright useful term. It excludes argument.

NOTE V.

Been five times to America. It seems like going to a bigger home. For genuine kindness, hospitality, and sense of kinship, America is delightful beyond words. If I had to live out of England, I should at once decide to live in the United States.

In the summer of 1873 I paid a visit to Worcester, Massachusetts, for the purpose of calling upon Mr. Gough, who had been for one night my guest in England. We duly arrived at the Bay State Hotel, and found it difficult to secure any attention, because of some kind of Convention which had been held there that very day. At length we were taken up—I am afraid to say how high—and after ringing all the bells we could lay hands on, we managed to prepare ourselves for a short walk in the wide main street of Worcester. By accident we called upon a very genial corn-dealer, who told us where Mr. Gough lived, and suggested that we should look out for Mr. Gough's light trap next morning (as it came into the city every day for his letters), and run out to Boylston to see our friend. The genial corn-dealer, however, did not suggest how we were to get back again; and in this failure he represented many kind and inventive geniuses who make birds with one wing only. We resolved, therefore, to take a vehicle next morning and perform the double journey at our own charges, as it was planned for our own enjoyment. A most pleasant six-mile drive, truly. The road was altogether English in its aspect, and might have been a turnpike in Kent or Surrey for anything we could see to the contrary. The flowering hedges, the undulating landscape, the singing birds, the warm, yet not sultry air, make an impression which will not soon fade. But where is Mr. Gough's house? Down this gentle slope, up that winding steep, and you see a gate before you. That cannot be the gate we want, because it opens upon what we call in England "a gentleman's grounds." No temperance lecturer can have a place like that. It must belong to some American speculator, some Californian miner, some merchant prince. So we poor humble English people suppose; but we are wrong, for the 'cute driver says, "I guess this is Mr. Gough's place, sir," and away he rolls his wheels up the long and beautiful carriage-drive. There's the house! Not large, but compact, bright, summer-like wholly, as it stands as quietly and as independently as one of the many noble trees that adorn the wide-spreading and verdant grounds. It is a kind of paradise. The spirit of rest seems to settle upon us as a dove whilst we stand at the half-open door and give a rat-tat which even yet has some doubt in it as to the identity of the place. Temperance lecturers in England live in streets, in cottages with gardens about the size of five sheets of postage-stamps, just round the corner there, next door to the "practical shoemaker," and just opposite the "Lamb and Woolpack," where "fine old mild ale" is sold. Temperance lecturers in England get a guinea for their sublimest rhetoric, with a hint that the "Society" can hardly afford it. But here is the head and crown of the whole host of temperance lecturers in a beautiful paradisaic residence, surrounded by no less than two hundred and forty acres of productive and ornamental land. And he deserves every spadeful of it. He has nobly earned it by hard work, and by the exercise of gifts of a peculiarly useful kind. Mr. Gough's lecturing is downright hard work. He is no dainty, self-sparing speaker, who chatters nonsense or utters amiable nothings. Every hair of his head speaks, every drop of blood is alive with unusual vigour, and every sensibility is on the stretch. The public insist upon hearing him, and the public insist upon paying him. What do you suppose they give Mr. Gough for a lecture? What do you think of ten guineas a night? What do you think of twenty? Double the twenty, and you will know what his ordinary fee is; multiply it by four, and you will know what he often gets for a single lecture. Then surely he must ruin the societies that engage him? On the contrary, the societies make more out of Mr. Gough than Mr. Gough makes out of the societies. I happened to be in his house at the same time with the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, Philadelphia, and the secretary said that they would give Mr. Gough eighty pounds for his lecture, and make eighty pounds by it themselves. This is the due reward of genius and industry. It strains nobody, it helps many, and it encourages not a few. Depend upon it, the societies do not give Mr. Gough eighty pounds a night out of mere personal respect, but out of a fund of hard cash gathered at the door. In England they will not allow a public speaker, especially a minister, to receive what the public would most willingly give him. If a minister had two thousand pounds a year (which in many cases he could easily make) every shoemaker and buttermonger would "agitate" and "demonstrate" and abominate. Mr. Gough makes monetary stipulations—so much life for so much reward; and the result shows that in no degree is his sphere of usefulness diminished or embarrassed in consequence. Let the house, then, represent so much honourable commercial success. How the sun shines upon it; how the creepers entwine around it; how the birds gather and twitter and sing on the sunny roof! And Mr. Gough is wisely doing nothing but amusing himself with making newspaper cuttings and occasionally playing at bowls. Fifty-six years have not made an old man of him. Not a bit of it! Why should they? He is gray, certainly, but it is not the gray of weakness; it is worn rather as a kind of sober livery, and it well befits the honest face and kind eyes. He tells us that he has been obliged to *decline* twelve hundred invitations to deliver lectures during the winter next ensuing, which plainly shows that his high terms are no barrier to his immense and growing popularity. He takes us over his house, his neat drawing-room, his sweet-looking nest of a library; then into the "grass parlour," and then into the hospitable dining-room, where there is an abundant and most tempting teetotal dinner. We recall reminiscences, tell stories, make promises of a kindly sort, and leave beautiful Boylston well pleased with a visit as sunny as the radiant day on which it was made.

Here is a letter which explains itself:

"WORCESTER,
"*October* 6, 1873.

"MY DEAR MR. PARKER,

"We have not forgotten the studs, but will send to-morrow by Adams Express a package to 21, West 45 Street, containing eight photographs of the Yosemite valley; one of Mrs. Gough and myself; an illustrated guide-book to the Yosemite valley; a copy of the American edition of my 'Personal Recollections'; and two pairs of sleeve-buttons, one for yourself and one for Mrs. Parker; and the *studs.* I am a little fearful that the studs may not suit you; they are spirals instead of buttons. If you wear the spirals they will be all right, but if you wear the button style you must get them altered.

"Now, my dear friend, let us thank you most heartily for your kindness in taking so much pains to call on us when you had so short a time in the country, and so many places to visit, and such a multitude of people to see. We shall not forget it, and we have often spoken of it. The little visit of yourself and Mrs. Parker was to us all perfectly delightful and refreshing—to the young people and visitors—and you can hardly tell how much good you have done us all, or how much we all appreciate your visit. I failed to meet you in New York, but Mr. Eddy and myself were on the lookout for you in Philadelphia; he and I would have been delighted to pay you some attention. We are all glad that your impressions of America are favourable. We shall think of you on your voyage, and trust you may reach your home and the scene of your important work in safety, health, and peace. You will return with the consciousness that you have done us all good. I heard of your visit to Andover. I go there to-morrow, and shall hear more. I am glad you could go there; Professor Park is one of my most valued friends.

"May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ have you in His holy keeping now and always. Please tell Mrs. Parker how much we were all charmed with her visit to us; we were happier and better for it.

"With kindest regards to you both from our household,

"I am,
"Most truly yours,
"JOHN B. GOUGH."

Here is a note of another kind:

"PRINCETON, N. J.,
"*October* 2, 1873.

"REV JOSEPH PARKER, D. D.,
"SIR,

"This is to inform you that the Cliosophic Society of Princeton College have unanimously elected you an honorary member."

Thus some men have greatness thrust upon them. It all indicates the same feeling of kindness, brotherhood, and masonry. Every Englishman with whom I travelled felt the same, and wondered at the abounding and never-ceasing hospitality.

Henry Ward Beecher has been, with his devoted wife, our guest for six weeks. We had been their guests at lovely Peekskill. We must have said a good deal about razors during the latter part of their enchanting visit, else how otherwise could Mr. Beecher have written thus?—

"MY DEAR DR. PARKER,

"I send you a pair of razors. They must be good, for the man who sold them told me so. They are not grumblers or tinklers, but easy-going, silent, and meditative.

"We reached Liverpool at 10.30, found the same rooms waiting for us that we had before.

Mother was *hungry*, and ate supper at eleven p. m., and slept well after it!

"We have been talking of the Parkers pretty much all the time since we left.

"I am a careful traveller, and seldom lose anything: but I grow careless with age, and I find that I left my heart behind me. If you do not find it, please send one in return, for, according to law, the landlord is responsible for all valuables left in his care.

"I meet the Ministers at eleven o'clock this a. m., and it is now twenty minutes of the time. I will write a line this p. m. to Mrs. Parker, and give some account of the affair.

"With much love,
"Yours evermore,
"HENRY WARD BEECHER.

"LIVERPOOL,
"*October* 18, 1886."

Then, again, on November 29, 1886:

"I have a case of razors. If they do not suit, you should vote your beard to be made up of *bristles*, or, as Mrs. Parker would say, 'You are a *pig!*' * I shall send them by P. O., if they will take them, or by *express—paid;* so do not pay over again; and if they charge you aught, I charge you to let me know, and I will see to it at this end of the route."

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* My wife denies this; but, remember, Binney denied Dickens.

This is only the postscript; the body of the letter relates to another subject, and on that account is most important:

"BROOKLYN,
"*November* 29, 1886.

"MY DEAR PARKER,

"I have just received and read the *News*, and your remarks upon the Bishop's inhibition of Haweis. They are admirable, could hardly be bettered—good in spirit, in discrimination, and well fitted to do good among enlightened Churchmen. About *that time* when you were speaking, the Episcopal General Conference, now in session at Chicago, and Phillips Brooks, of Boston, the most able and influential *Minister* (not *clergyman!*) in the land, was uttering sentiments the most Catholic, Liberal, and Christian in regard to all other churches not Episcopal.

"I am glad, on the whole, Haweis did *not* preach for you. Had he officiated, everybody would have said, 'Very well; why not?' But, being forbidden to preach, everybody, with tenfold emphasis, cried out, 'Why not?'

"I enclose a paragraph as to Brooklyn affairs that may interest you.

"My health is good. I am just getting over the prostration following the voyage.

"Ever yours,
"HENRY WARD BEECHER."

Bearing on the same subject, I received a note from another correspondent, which greatly pleased me:

"Eastern Lodge,
"Brighton,
"*November* 1, 1886.

"Dear Dr. Parker,

"Your remarks upon the inhibition of my friend Mr. Haweis were excellently conceived and expressed in admirable taste.

"Very truly yours,
"George Jacob Holyoake."

This from a non-theist! I can testify that, whatever Mr. Holyoake may be or may not be theologically, he is not only a superb debater, he is a gentleman in his very soul.

Delane called in. Showed him a new idea in journalism. I said, "It is quite true a man cannot serve two masters, but why may not a man have two servants?" He called on me to explain. Said I, "Let me write for the *Morning Tory* and also for the *Morning Liberal.* Thus: Mr. Gladstone is going to address his constituents next week, and before hearing the speech, I write an article ready for the *Tory* of the next day. I begin thus: 'The verbose and endless speech delivered by Mr. Gladstone last night to his long-suffering constituents was marvellous, even as coming from that master of rhetorical confusion and ventose elaboration. Not even the ex-Premier himself ever used so many words in pompously and ponderously saying less than nothing,' etc. Then in the *Liberal* I could say, respecting the same speech: 'For grasp of thought and aphoristic force the great statesman was at his best last night. His hearers were simply spellbound. The chief of the magicians held them entirely at his will. This speech will stand with the noblest Philippics of Demosthenes, and the smoothest music of Tully,'" etc. I then asked Delane what he thought of a notion that struck me as more original than the creation itself. He asked where my conscience was. He asked me to define honesty. He demanded at what University I had studied ethics. In short, he became quite moral. And me a minister! It is really very awkward when laymen meddle with morals. They can be very nasty about it.

NOTE VI.

My literary reputation is extending. Vambéry called upon me. What a compliment! He never calls on second-rate minds. He little knew I was a Dissenter—and was I the man to reveal the ugly fact? Why, they would expel me from the Eclectic Bicycle Club if they knew I kept a "Nonconformist conscience." In the genteel suburbs they think I am "something in the City," which is true enough, so I need not enlighten them. Vambéry was delighted with me. When he saw that I knew all about Ali Ekber, and that I could trace his own route from Kazvin to Tehran, he was delighted beyond words. He said that next to me Lord Strangford was the most wonderful linguist in the world. English is the only language I can dream in, but I did not tell Arminius Vambéry that. I am not going back on English, for it is simply astonishing how many good things could be said in English if they would only occur to the mind. So elastic is English that I believe it would lend itself to the expression even of poetic ideas, if one had any.

There are many ways of getting a good deal of enjoyment out of life without spending much. For example, we are saving up to buy ourselves a carriage for daily use in old age, and as a matter of fact we are already riding in it in imagination. We have settled that it is to be a landau; then we can open it or shut it according to the weather. [I once made a few verses on the weather, which were once sung in public, but only once.] One day we think the landau shall be a very, very pale brown (a sort of mouse-coloured brown, don't you know), and another day we prefer a liver-colour. Once I proposed red wheels, but my wife withered me with a look. I still think they would look nice and warm when the snow was on the ground. We have determined to have machinery inside the carriage, by which we can open and shut the landau when we please; then we need not trouble the coachman, who, being a working-man, naturally shrinks from having too much to do. The man is to have top-boots. On that point my wife's mind is made up. When we ride now in our one-horse shay from the livery stables [half a crown per hour, or a lump sum per job] my wife is invariably shocked by the man's get-up, especially by his hat. That hat ruins her comfort in driving. It is so brown, so oily, and so aged. Of course, when we are driving we cannot get out of the way of that sere and yellow leaf the coachman's hat. There it is! It throws an autumnal yellow upon the very brightness of midsummer. It even depresses the horse. Mr. Wolfe says we ought to have a good stand-up horse, and a carriage worthy of my talents. An undeniably nice man is Mr. Wolfe, to speak so kindly of such poor possessions. It shows good feeling on his part, and is encouraging. I wish some warm-hearted soul was so much in love with my talents that he would present me with a carriage, that I might give them an occasional airing in the green lanes out Hendon way, coming back by Edgware Road. The carriage, however, is no difficulty to us; it is the man that scares us. I could make money enough by my pen to buy the carriage. Two leaders in the *Times*, three scorching reviews in the *Saturday*, a fusillade on Salisbury in the *Contemporary*, and there's the carriage! But the man, the dram-drinking man, the 'bacca-chewing man, the man who kicks the horses and smashes the harness when I am not there, the man who steals the corn and sells the hay, and gives the horse a cough and a touch of colic when he does not want to drive us out—that's the mischief; that's the black un. It is astonishing how awkward even a coachman can be. As a preacher, I am bound to say that in the Bible there is not a single coachman mentioned with respect. Even Jehu was a madcap. I don't believe they put up a headstone for him.

My pen! Yes; that's the winning sword. Every time I fill an inkstand it is the same as putting fifty pounds into the bank. Say I, with swelling pride: Every drop of that ink is money; every drop is a maxim, an epigram, or an epic in embryo. I hold the precious liquid where the sun can strike it, and I say: Golden fish are floating in that pool; I see there tales, poems, sermons, snarling paragraphs, anonymous attacks, and poison for my enemies.

Ha, ha! What a liquid blessing is ink! Of course, I don't get the money, but neither do I get the carriage; what of that? I might any day get them both, and is not the title of my book "Might Have Been"? What business have other men to succeed where I have failed? I would have written "Hamlet" if it had occurred to me. Of course I would. What business had Shakespeare to sweep everything into his net? I was coming along, and might have done both "Othello" and "King Lear." I did not refuse to do them—in fact, I was prepared to do them, but the fellow got ahead of me, and left me to lead a lazy life. Then in mathematics—what I might have done! But the whole thing was done before I came into visible existence. I advisedly say into visible existence, because all men were in the loins of Adam, and from one point of view it was a mere chance whether Shakespeare or I came out first. If I had come out first, the world would not have been where it is to-day. But Shakespeare came first, and left us nothing to do but quotation. Talk about justice! Talk about man and brother! There is no encouragement to buy literary apparatus. Look at my own case: I have a folding-desk, a silver-topped inkstand, a gold pen, a quart of ink, and a quire of paper, and when I look round for a job worthy of my talents, I find that Shakespeare has done everything, and that he is grinning at me over the prickles of a lace collar. But my mind is made up. I have cut out a career for myself. I will deny that the plays were written by Shakespeare—there's a field. I will knock him off his stool. I will expose him. I will suggest that I may have written the plays myself, and dropped them from the ceiling, and that the villain Shakespeare only picked them up and took them to the printer. As a professing Christian, I am bound to have my revenge. What is the use of having Ten Commandments, if you don't see that somebody else keeps them?

I have just taken a turn round the garden, and thought out the pen-and-ink idea in its commercial aspects. I like it. Literature suggests an idyllic life. I see where I could put up a neat writing-tent in the garden, and if it moves on a pivot I can go round with the sun. In such a tent I could not help writing, because ideas would flow upon one, and metaphors would drop from the golden laburnums. Editors would be ringing my bell all day long, and rushing up in competitive hansoms, and I would get each of them to pay in advance. I have to trust them, or they have to trust me. It shall be on the second basis. I think a series of crisp articles abusive of my brethren might be a good seam to work. Personality is always popular. Of course, the articles would be anonymous, so that I could dine with my victims, and see how they took it. Spite need not interfere with hospitality. Having carved the man's soul, why should I not carve his leg of mutton? Spite is a fine old fiend. I know a man [so modest!] who is all made up of spite. He is, of course, a Christian professor, but so spiteful! He scratches; he grins his fury; he hates, so I don't think I will try the spite line. No; leave that to the prince of the devils. The best thing to do would be to write a great novel. That would be easy. Get your characters and keep them moving, and there you are! I have read somewhere that what the public want is not "moral," but "thrill." Why not? But if I never sold a copy I should not go without reward, for "to create within the mind is bliss," and my own characters would be good enough company for me. Writing has an elevating effect upon the mind. Suppose I sold only——

* * * * *

No. My mind is made up. There will be no tent in the garden. There will be no bitter paragraphs. It was a temptation of the devil, and I'll none of it. Rather than try to hinder good men in their earnest work, I will beg my bread. Newspapers should be the allies, not the enemies, of the pulpit.

No man could accuse C. H. Spurgeon of plagiarism. The idea is simply laughable. I wonder if other men ever plagiarised Spurgeon? No. C. H. Spurgeon was honest through and through, even to his own hurt and cost in some social directions. That was a point the pastor of the Tabernacle would never consider.

Here is another letter from his genial pen:

"WESTWOOD,
"BEULAH HILL,
"UPPER NORWOOD,
"*January* 29, 1883.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I have been hitherto under the idea that I was to have the pleasure of preaching at the Temple on the 8th February, but my secretary told me to-night that it was the 1st—that is, next Thursday. I earnestly hope it is not so, but I am in a great stew about it. Is it so? Please send me a telegram.

"I have had sorrow upon sorrow, or I would have written about it before, for I feel great delight in the exchange which has been made so far as it has gone, and I fear I look ungrateful.

"I am your man for the 1st, if you have so advertised me, but it will disappoint my people who meant to be there. We must make the best of it.

"If the 8th, I shall be glad, and I wish you would beg your friends to pray for me.

"The loss of two deacons who have been my friends in true love these twenty-five years has been a stunning blow, and must excuse me if I have been forgetful.

"With kindest regards,
"Yours heartily,
"C. H. SPURGEON."

Happily we had not fixed the date he feared, and I telegraphed to him accordingly. Here is his reply:

"WESTWOOD,
"BEULAH HILL,
"UPPER NORWOOD,
"*January* 31, 1883.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I was greatly relieved last night by your telegram, which came to Balham to our deacons' meeting. Suppose we now fix February 15. Could you make my coming to be of any service to any of your societies or good works? If so, use me at your pleasure.

"I am much touched by your kindness. At the Tabernacle we are all in a chastened condition through our heavy bereavement. We shall not be able for years to fill up the gaps made by these two arrows of death. The meeting last night was tender; we seemed endeared to each other by a feeling that we are so soon to part. Truly we may all see how wasteful it is to spend the few days of our sojourning in disputing about trifles.

"Peace be to you and to your helpers.

"Yours heartily,
"C. H. SPURGEON."

What a beautiful revelation of his pastoral heart! How he loved his people, and lived for them! Herein he was an example to all pastors. I do not know that I have had any appreciation of my public labours more precious than the following:

"WESTWOOD,
"BEULAH HILL,
"UPPER NORWOOD,
"*March* 8, 1884.

"DEAR DR. PARKER,

"Since your kindly service to the Stockwell Orphanage I have been restrained from writing to thank you through being exceedingly unwell. The pain is better now, though it leaves me so weak that to move from chair to chair is quite a feat. I am able to sit up to write, and my first duty is to *thank you.* I do so with all my heart.

"You have been kindness itself to me. Without solicitation you have aided me in my work with brotherly heartiness. The Great Father reward you for this. I am burdened with a sense of personal unworthiness; but the cause of the orphan is worthy of all service, and I am sure you will have a reward in advocating it. Still, I feel none the less a *personal* gratitude, which I will not attempt to express, except it will be in prayer to God for you, and your church, and your work. The Lord God Almighty bless you.

"What a sermon you gave the people upon the occasion of our orphans' visit! That latter portion about answers to prayer in the Divine sense touched me much. How little do we pray for! Much in words, but so little as to our interpretation of the words! I pray for health—will it only come to me in the higher way? It may be so.

"Yours most gratefully,
"C. H. Spurgeon."

Ay, in "the higher way"! Let us get out of the prison of literalism into the open air of the spiritual!

On reading letters such as have been given, I can imagine some implacable critic remarking that they are all so full of praise or thanks as to suggest a comfortable conceit on the part of the gratified receiver. I have little hope of making a favourable impression upon any unfriendly readers, or even upon those friendly readers who are by nature born to suspect the motives of other men. Yet it is in my power to comfort them all. They may rest assured that no public man of my acquaintance has received more letters of abuse and spite than have fallen to my share. If spite could kill a man, I ought not to be alive at this moment; I ought, indeed, to be dead and buried, and far below the effect of any recalling trumpet—away where the resurrection is never heard of. I have been traduced, sneered at, opposed, and killed over and over again in anonymous public letters. Guns and pistols, darts and sabres, and the pestilence that walketh in darkness, have all gone for me, and yet, kind Heaven be praised, I am here to tell the ghastly tale. Now the bitterest of critics will allow me the hard-won solace of laying before him a few helpful testimonies, and I assure him that when he needs like comfort I will not be the man to pluck the fragrant rose from his grateful hand. Not a hard-working man amongst us has one encouragement too many in a life often troubled, often weary.

My vestry on a Thursday morning often presents instructive, and sometimes amusing, scenes. It is my custom after the Thursday morning service to see anybody for a few minutes who may want to see me on any manner of business. I do not limit the business to purely ministerial affairs; I provide a listening ear for the general and clamorous public.

On one occasion a very pale-faced young man came into the vestry, and, after a moment's hesitatain, said: "I am studying to be a poet." No sooner did I hear these ominous words than I touched my electric bell with my left foot, in response to which an assistant appeared, and we gracefully got the young budding poet out into the open air with the least possible delay. He was, however, more of a man than I had at first thought him to be; for no sooner did he get home than he wrote me a letter to this effect: "When I came into your vestry, you rang a bell to get me out; when I next come, I hope you will blow a trumpet to welcome me in." The young man has not since appeared, and the trumpet, therefore, has not been called into requisition. When young men have to "study" to be poets, they had better not begin;

for, with Victor Hugo, I believe that to compose poetry is either easy or impossible.

On another occasion a remarkably fine-looking, middle-aged lady came into the vestry to ask my advice under peculiar circumstances. She could speak three languages. She had a private income of over eight hundred pounds a year. She made her statement, up to a given point, with great simplicity and clearness. At that point, however, she broke away, saying that she was being pursued by persons who had apparently no object, but whose real purpose it was to do her some bodily injury. At that point my flesh began to creep, as did the flesh of old Eliphaz. I hate anything ghostly and mysterious of this kind. When anything is really ghostly I admire it, but ghostliness under such very large circumstances simply alarms and repels me. Said my visitor: "I go to a boarding-house, and for the first two or three days nothing can be more agreeable than the treatment which I receive; at the end of that time, however, I see the waiter put something into the teapot, and I know it to be poison. I have studied toxicology enough to know that this blue mark upon my teeth could not be there if I were not being slowly poisoned by my enemies." I rang the same friendly bell with my foot (for it must be known that this bell is in the carpet, and that it can be rung without anybody knowing that the action has been taken), and in a few moments my really entertaining visitor was quietly conducted into the royal thoroughfare known as Holborn Viaduct.

Instances of quite other kinds have occurred both on Thursday and on Sunday. Seated in my chair on one occasion, I remember the vestry-door being opened, and the whole space seemed to be filled up by the largest and blackest face I had ever set eyes upon. No sooner did the wearer of that face come to me, than he laid hold of my hand with a vice-like grip, and simply opened a cavern of a mouth that seemed to be illuminated by the most dazzlingly white teeth I have ever seen. The man did not speak, but simply laughed in the loudest and most continuous manner until my confusion was complete. When his laugh was concluded, he announced his name as Josiah Henson, the prototype of Uncle Tom in the immortal work of Harriet Beecher Stowe. I can never forget that laugh, nor can I forget that black but radiant face. Whether Henson was "Uncle Tom" or not, he certainly had a very marked and memorable personality of his own.

One Thursday morning a German professor called upon me, and showed me some really admirable testimonials. I have, however, now lived long enough to regard testimonals, even when they are genuine, with considerable suspicion and disfavour. On this occasion the German professor simply wanted a little money to enable him to go to Glasgow, where an a appointment was awaiting him. He looked honest; he spoke very agreeably. It appeared to me that his purpose and methods were perfectly simple and creditable. I ventured to say to him, in my most deferential, interrogative tone: "Are you really an honest man?" It is as true as I live that the man answered me in the affirmative. I then asked him how soon he would be able to return the money if I lent him any. He said he would return it certainly within one calendar month. I then handed him two sovereigns, which he wisely deposited in his pocket. That event occurred nearly six years ago. As the man declared himself to be honest, there can, of course, be no doubt that he did send the money back, but unfortunately it never reached me. It seems more charitable to blame the post-office than to reproach an unknown German professor, coming as he does from a country to which we are under such profound theological obligations. Speaking of borrowing, I am reminded of a very cautious Scotchman, who came to me to ask for the loan of a sovereign. No one will be able to guess the ground on which he supported his plea. I may as well, therefore, say at once that the man gave as his reason for wishing to borrow the sovereign that he had often had the pleasure of hearing me preach. "Now," said I, "that appears to me an excellent reason for your lending me a sovereign, but how in the name of any star that ever burned it is a plea for you to borrow a sovereign of me I certainly cannot make out." With my left foot I again touched my friend in the carpet, and he gave a nudge to another friend in the further vestry, and by dint of the very finest diplomacy ever practised by the human mind we got the cautious Scotchman out into the open air. Where he is now I really do not know, but if he is still in the fresh air it will be good for his health.

Another visitor, akin to the above, yet slightly different from them, is the man who comes to me with hearty salutations, hopes I am very well, is delighted to see me, has heard me with the greatest gratification, and begs to thank me with the warmest cordiality for my discourse. I then observe that he puts his hand behind his back, takes something out of his coat-pocket, and wishes to sell me a coloured photograph of myself. My foot somehow instinctively goes to the bell in the carpet, and my friends reappear in considerable numbers, and we succeed in removing the intruder considerably before he has arranged to meet his friends outside.

Only the other Thursday a man called upon me with a very simple request. He said: "Dr. Parker, I want to ask you to give me and my people one little half-hour of your time." What could be simpler? What could be neater? What could be less clamorous or less exorbitant? I said: "Very good; that shall be done if it will be really of any service to you. Now, where is it?" He then proceeded to say it was at the very uttermost point of the East End of London. "Now," said I, "I live at Hampstead, and it will take me an hour and a half to get to the locality you indicate. What becomes of your request for one little half-hour of my time?" I was so indignant that I continued my speech in these words: "If you had asked me to cut out the heart of one working day in the week and give it to you, I should have known that you had at least some appreciation of the favour you were asking; but as you have chosen to put it as the sacrifice of one little half-hour, it is clear to me that you do not know the value of my time, and that it is my duty to decline to visit you under false pretences." It is impossible for almost anything to be done publicly in London in one little half-hour. When men know that they are asking the surrender of most of a day, and plainly say so, we can deal with them as reasonable beings.

I have, of course, callers of a very different kind. One comes to tell of some great grief at home, and to solicit personal and public prayer because of the overwhelming sorrow. Another comes to tell me that he has lost all his four children but one, and that his heart is broken, and that even the summer-time brings him nothing but darkness. Another comes to say that he is about to leave for the Cape, for New Zealand, for Canada, or for Australia, and to thank me for the services which he has enjoyed in the City Temple. Thus the callers come and go, leaving behind them mixed memories. I am glad of the opportunity of seeing my friends, and of seeing some who have no specific claim to the title. All these incidents are so many lessons in human nature. I accept them as such, and endeavour to find in them material for profitable prayer and exposition.

NOTE VII.

PASTORAL life is a joy more than official. It is of the nature of parental life. The pastor is a member of every family; no man can replace him. In sickness it is the pastor that is sent for. The people have heard him, watched the whole movement of his soul, and taken possession of the key of his influence. The pastor's life is a life of self-revelation, a daily out-giving and self-bestowal. The pastor who lives for his people will live in his people.

Nonconformists should never give up their pastoral service. They should have the key of homes, then they will get the key of hearts. We are not priests; we are not constables; we are fathers, elder brothers, physicians, who belong to the family. If any young man should want to do nothing but preach to his people, I should predict no good of him. The shepherd is the best preacher, if quality goes for anything.

One of the sweetest old pastors I ever knew was Dr. James Morison. Here is a letter he sent me from Kilmalcolm, dated March 8:

> "DEAR DR. PARKER,
>
> "I feel it an utter impossibility to characterise in words my appreciation of the kind-

> ness of which, to my astonishment, you made me the recipient when I was in London. As regards the great work you conduct in the City Temple, I am filled with wonder and admiration. May the Great Father still uphold and guide you in the discharge of the high duties of your high position! . . .
>
> "Ever yours, with profound regard and affection."

Never have any fear of preaching to great preachers. They are more charitable than others. They can make allowances; they can excuse.

A brilliant preacher may be a poor pastor, and *vice versâ*. Let every man be credited with the kind of work he can do best. The lightning and the dew are both God's instruments. Do we blame a nightingale because it is not a lion? Do we blame a lion because it cannot sing? Yet we hear people talk of a preacher thus: He has not the learning of a Lightfoot or the polish of a Liddon; he cannot thunder like Chalmers, nor can he charm like Wilberforce; to the brilliance of Magee he can lay but small claim. If he could be and do all this, he would not be so much a minister as a monster. In the name of reason and justice, let every man be himself.

I think the pulpit of this day is far in advance of any former pulpit. Possibly there are not so many outstanding names, but the whole level is higher.

The pew makes the pulpit. What the people demand they will get. If they want anecdotes and muffin-pathos, they can drag down the pulpit to that level. A good deal of preaching seems to be addressed to invalids. There is a pill and mixture taste about it. We want more open air, and more going uphill. Will the press put down the pulpit? Yes. When? When correspondence puts down conversation; when postcards put down smiling; when telegrams put down love talking to love. The wonders wrought in chemistry by catalysis are worked in preaching by the personality of the speaker.

He is either a very great preacher or a very little one who can do without personal encouragement. Mr. Spurgeon liked to have his friends about him. Here's a letter bearing on the point:

"WESTWOOD,
"BEULAH HILL,
"UPPER NORWOOD,
"*June* 4, 1884.

"DEAR DR. PARKER,

"On June 19 is my fiftieth birthday, and it would be an honour to me if the chairman of the Congregational Union would give a short speech in the evening upon that occasion. It would also be a personal kindness if *Dr. Parker* did so, as Dr. Parker.

"The occasion is one which I promise not to repeat. The request I hope you can grant.

"Yours very heartily,
"C. H. SPURGEON."

I do not know that Mr. Spurgeon was a pastor in the common sense of the term, but he had a pastor's great heart, and many a ministry of love he privately fulfilled. How he cared for his orphans, and how they loved him in return! Like all great natures, Mr. Spurgeon exaggerated all the little services which his friends rendered to him. How otherwise could he have written this letter?—

> "Dear Friend,
>
> "I heartily thank you for your generous fellowship in my work among the fatherless. You have rendered aid in the most free-hearted, unsolicited manner, and have done it so grandly that I am left wondering and thanking. The Lord has ways of repaying kindnesses done to those who are so specially cast upon His Fatherhood as these dear children are; He will recompense you according to His grace. I cannot recompense you, but I must acknowledge the debt, and I do so with heartiness. It would be painful to be under obligation to some men; it is a pleasure to be indebted to you several times over, as I freely confess I am.
>
> "The Lord be with you,
>
> "Your grateful friend,
>
> "C. H. Spurgeon.
>
> "*February* 10, 1886."

How could such a man fail to touch the common heart? In Mr. Spurgeon's philanthropy there was nothing narrow. His Orphanage was not sectarian. His principle of admission was most divinely human. But the whole age is widening. The earth casts out all littleness. Whenever you find a preacher who is a little man, you find a little man who has no business to preach.

The death of Mr. Spurgeon removes the greatest religious enthusiast of this country and this age. The English pulpit has lost its most conspicuous figure. The only pulpit name of the nineteenth century that will be remembered is no longer the name of a living man. For forty years Mr. Spurgeon worked splendidly in every sense; his simplicity, his constancy, his standstillness, won for him, through many difficulties, a unique and invincible position in Christian England. The intensity of his character gave him much of his power. He never saw the horizon; he never looked for it. He did not see any real need for it. There would be no special harm in this, if he had not blamed other men for seeing what he himself did not perceive. This, however, was at once his strength and his weakness. Mr. Spurgeon was absolutely destitute of intellectual benevolence. If men saw as he did, they were orthodox; if they saw things in some other way, they were heterodox, pestilent, and unfit to lead the minds of students or inquirers. Mr. Spurgeon's was a superlative egotism; not the shilly-shallying, timid, half-disguised egotism that cuts off its own head, but the full-grown, overpowering, sublime egotism that takes the chief seat as if by right. The only colours which Mr. Spurgeon recognised were black and white. In all things he was definite. With Mr. Spurgeon you were either up or down, in or out, alive or dead. As for middle zones, graded lines, light compounding with shadow in a graceful exercise of give-and-take, he simply looked upon them as heterodox, and as implacable enemies of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. On the other hand, whilst there was no intellectual benevolence, who could compare with him in moral sympathy? Who so large of heart? Who so responsive to pain and need and helplessness? In this view Mr. Spurgeon was in very deed two men. The theologian and the philanthropist lived at opposite sides of the universe. Those who were damned by the theologian were saved by the philanthropist. Mr. Spurgeon's heart was immense and full of love. His Orphanage was the best commentary on his Tabernacle. In the Orphanage Mr. Spurgeon was the prince of Arminians; in the Tabernacle he was the sturdiest of Calvinists. And all this was true to the form and expression of the remarkable head and face. The head was the very image of stubbornness; massive, broad, low, hard; the face was large, rugged, social, brightened by eyes overflowing with humour, and softened by a most gracious and sympathetic smile.

The ministry of Mr. Spurgeon has shown that an intensely religious method, as distinguished from a literary and academical style, can achieve very notable success. Mr. Spurgeon's was emphatically religious or spiritual preaching. It was not literary; it was not argumentative; it was not coldly intellectual; it was simply and thoroughly religious, sometimes almost ruthlessly so, for it forced every text to the same uses. Mr. Spurgeon had but one sermon, yet it was always new. To Mr. Spurgeon Christianity was not an argument, but a message; not something to be discussed, but something to be delivered by the preacher and instantaneously accepted by the hearer. Other ministers account for the universe; Mr. Spurgeon simply took it for granted, and made the best he could of it. Other ministers take the Bible to pieces and put it together again in some other shape; Mr. Spurgeon took it from his mother's hands, in plain English, and accepted every word of it as the very speech of God. This Bible letter came straight from heaven, and the very post-mark on the face of it was a vital part of the contents. The envelope also was fashioned in heaven. The commas and the semicolons were all there by direct inspiration and guidance of God. This was his faith, and it made him strong. The intense religiousness of his preaching was seen in the texts which he took even in the ministry of his boyhood. Other young preachers are naturally great in the treatment of Biblical narratives and anecdotes. They fasten eagerly, for example, on Daniel in the lions' den, and to the extent of a whole course of lectures they revel in the story of Jonah. They can handle drama better than doctrine. Mr. Spurgeon boldly went at once to the deepest and greatest themes.

At nineteen he preached to countless thousands from such texts as "Accepted in the Beloved"; "No man cometh unto Me except the Father draw him"; "And of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." Some men have never ventured to take those texts even after a lifetime of service. Mr. Spurgeon took them at once as the very seven notes that made all God's music, and he did so as by Divine right and impulse. As he began, so he continued. He never changed; he never went in quest of the fourth dimension or the eighth note; his first and his last were one.

The changes in public opinion respecting Mr. Spurgeon were astounding, so much so that we wonder in some cases if they were sincere. Mr. Spurgeon was described as "the mountebank of the pulpit," as coarse, vulgar, blasphemous, mingling jests and prayers with profane looseness and wildness. A distinguished editor spoke thirty-five years ago of Mr. Spurgeon's "vulgar slang." Mr. Binney once said that he would not enter a pulpit until Mr. Spurgeon had been out of it for six months. In one of her letters, printed in her memoir, George Eliot says: "My impressions fell below the lowest judgment I had ever passed upon him"; and again, "utterly common and empty of guiding intelligence or emotion"; and, again, the great novelist says: "It was the most superficial grocer's back-parlour view of Calvinistic Christianity, and I was shocked to find how low the mental pitch of our society must be, judged by the standard of this man's celebrity." Mr. Spurgeon himself gathered a volume of caricatures, censures, insults, and gibes of every kind, and sometimes looked into it to remind himself of his early reception. He literally appalled the old-pattern churchgoer. He made men laugh in church. He pressed humour into the service of theology. This Essex man drove bullock waggons through ecclesiastical aisles. His pulpit gown was a smock-frock. Yet now he stands at the top. He plants both feet on the giddiest eminence. Men speak of his vivid style, his simple Saxon, his unadorned English, his dramatic force. The change is in his critics, and not in himself. And he cared as much for the praise as he did for the ridicule. His head was never turned. Never did man carry an infinite fame with such sober modesty. He was ever simple, loving, gentle, and boundlessly kind, except when he was stung by the nettle of "modern thought." Then he became almost Papal; he excommunicated whole assemblies; he issued manifestoes; he darkened the whole chapel sky with thunder, whose bolts of tallow wrought no havoc. Yet "modern thought" goes on, and men grow nobler in manhood. Even denunciation cannot turn back the summer-bringing year. So Mr. Spurgeon hindered nothing that was good, while he denounced many things that were bad.

Mr. Spurgeon's prayers were not the least remarkable part of his ministry. They were crude, direct, definite, and determined on being answered at once. Sometimes, too, they abounded in quaint expressions and odd phrases. In his first London pulpit I heard him pray thus: "O Lord, may many souls be converted to-night that shall shine for ever as gems in the bracelets of Jesus." In praying for Mr. John B. Gough at the Tabernacle, he did not take the usual roundabout course of describing Mr. Gough as "Thy servant who has come from a distant yet friendly country in order that he may," etc., but, stretching out his right arm in a favourite attitude, he bluntly said: "God bless our friend Gough." To Mr. Spurgeon prayer simply meant asking; it seldom rose to spiritual contemplation, or lost the business-like petition in entranced and ecstatic communion with God.

Mr. Spurgeon's career has settled several important points. He has proved that evangelical preaching can draw around itself the greatest congregation in the world, and hold it for a lifetime. He has also proved that it is possible to draw and to hold the greatest congregation without organ, or band, or choir, or painted window. He has demonstrated beyond all doubt or question that the voluntary principle can be so worked as to sustain the greatest religious and benevolent institutions in the fullest vigour, and he has vividly, almost indeed sublimely, illustrated the Divine election which chooses its own instruments, protects them in the face of all hostility, and brings obscurity to the point of world-wide renown. Mr. Spurgeon was ordained "in a mountain apart."

The great voice has ceased. It was the mightiest voice I ever heard—a voice that could give orders in a tempest, and find its way across a torrent as through a silent aisle. Very gentle, too, it could be, sweet and tender, and full of healing pity. That voice has ceased to sing those lower hymns. The rugged presence is withdrawn. Life's fight has closed in victory, and weariness has dropped asleep. Let us quietly look upon the image of rest, and look upon it through tears of thankfulness. The great unimagined vision has dawned on the translated soul. Away yonder in heaven's eternal morning he sees all things in their right proportion and their right colour, and his soul, always responsive to sunshine and music, rises to a new exultancy of love as he meets and accosts in the City of Light many whom he had unwittingly misjudged and wronged. Meanwhile, the stress is greater upon those who remain. Each must further tax his strength so as to lessen the loss which has come upon the whole Church. The Christ-banner cannot suffer final loss. It will float over a conquered world. Do or leave undone what we may, the holy work will go forward to completion, for thus it is appointed and written in the decrees which have ordained that summer shall melt the snow, and the stars in their courses shall fight for God.

NOTE VIII.

THE world is in its humdrum old age. Breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. That's all. Some of the pale originalities are lies. My newspaper this morning says, "According to John Wesley 'religion never was designed to make our pleasures less.'" Now, John Wesley never said anything of the sort. It was Isaac Watts. Not J. W., but I. W. The same paper says, "The people listened with wrapt attention." What kind of attention is that?

What's to be done with the unemployed? Rebuild London. Lay down a gigantic plan of the new London, and work it out bit by bit. Build London in centres: the railway centre—the market centre—the banking centre—the book and journal centre—the hospital centre, etc. Make an underground London, a sub-London, a London out of sight. Rearrange the supply of water and light and electricity. Make a waterway between London and the coast. Make the central city residential, and snub the colonial suburbs, with their claypits and mock conservatories standing on stairheads. Even the City could have a good deal of garden thrown into it. Do away with the four-mile radius. Pay every cabman at an office before starting.

What would I do with Ireland? Let me tell you. Of course you'll smile. You may. My remedy for Ireland is to attach it to the mainland. Beaconsfield said many of Ireland's difficulties arose from the fact that it was surrounded by "the melancholy main." Very well. Then do away with the main and its melancholy. Engineers can get over the difficulty of tides and currents and winds. Of course, begin where the distance is least. Only fools would think of beginning anywhere else. There is a man in Sunderland who can carry out the works. I mean the man who built the last great pier there. Of course, time would be required. Certainly. You don't think Rome was built in a day, do you? When the poor street waif was told that the world was made in six days, she said London could hardly have been made in that time. But she was a born infidel—a stark-mad rampageous rationalist. From Stranræer can you not see and hear the linen looms of Belfast? Engineers can do the work if the State will find them the money. Then we shall hear nothing about Great Britain and Ireland; we shall hear only of a United and consolidated Kingdom. Rebuild London and bring Ireland into the mainland; there's work for you! At present we are merely talking, drinking turtle soup, and toasting the Lord Mayor. We want something bigger, grander, wiser.

* * *

The Lord Bishop of London called on me to-day and turned a cigar into smoke by throwing it into the fire. Fourpence gone at a stroke! He had formed a plan for getting rid of Dissent. He told me, as the curate did, that I was not in "orders." He offered to ordain me. I asked if he could give me orders, and he said "Yes." Then I drew a curtain, and introduced him to the Romish Cardinal, who at once disputed the Bishop's orders, and said the Bishop was only a layman. I asked the Cardinal if he was in the Apostolic line, and he said "Yes." Said I, "He is apostolic who in an apostolic spirit does apostolic work." I asked them both to remain to luncheon—a quiet little thing, not worth describing; and it was astonishing how human both the great men were. Said I internally, "One touch of luncheon makes the whole Church kin." It is difficult to be bigoted over devilled turkey and ginger-beer, though there's something very sectarian about the latter. The Cardinal remained after the Bishop, and showed me another way of treating a cigar.

"These fellows," said he, "are no more in the apostolic line than your shoemaker is."

"Is that so, Cardinal?"

"Yes; and they know it. They are impostors. I dare not tell you all that Leo has found out about them."

"But, how well you agreed at luncheon!"

"Oh yes; we are all human."

"Then," said I, "let us have more human intercourse and less ecclesiastical pretension. Let us eat and drink, and to-morrow ecclesiasticism will die."

Lord Salisbury sent for me. He was very pleasant. "Parker," said he, "drop in any time you are passing and take pot-luck." I replied, "The same to you, and many of them." I was nervous. It was in the middle of May, yet through sheer nervousness I was on the point of saying, "I wish you a happy New Year." I am the only Dissenting minister who is on hob-nobbing terms with a real Marquis. This makes Dissent almost respectable. On this ground I have been asked to join the local tennis club. The clubbers did not name my blazing genius, my unfathomable erudition, or my lovely disposition; they remarked only on my friendly relation to the Marquis. What is the chief end of man? To know a Marquis and glorify him for ever.

The Marquis said:

"I like your notion about connecting Ireland with the mainland."

And through nervousness I said:

"You are another."

"My notion," he continued, not heeding the irrelevancy of my remark, "is that we should fill up the channel with the carcases of the Whigs and the

Dissenters; we could pile them on one another, and top them with Gladstone and Harcourt, and all that gang, including all the Welsh Church robbers and all the Dissenting bodies."

I grew red with rage, and said:

"Do you know that I am a Dissenter and a Gladstonian?"

But a flunkey, six feet four high, brought a card to the Marquis, and so ended our interview.

The worst of it is, you cannot contradict an astronomer, and get any real credit for ability. When he tells you that one star is distant from another nine hundred and eighty-seven millions of miles and fourteen inches, one feels that he pledges his conscience. The inches have quite a moral sound. As for the millions of miles, we might hack away at them with a blunt axe, but we dare not touch them because of the inches. What the mouse can do for the lion!

NOTE IX.

BEEN at Hawarden. Spent week with Mr. Gladstone. We spoke a new language each day, fluently beginning with Chinese. I got up on my subjects, and took good care always to start the conversation myself, so that I could extemporise my boundless knowledge. I well remember beginning on the Round Towers of Antrim, knowing how deeply he was interested in all Irish questions. I thought he would like to know something about the round towers, as I supposed his studies had never taken him into such a subject. In polished Chinese I descanted on the three round towers in Antrim, which I described as a maritime county, and even ventured to say that it was in the province of Ulster. I told him that one round tower at Antrim was ninety-five feet high. I was very eloquent on the three round towers. Mr. Gladstone listened intently, so I felt I was making an impression upon him. When I paused for a moment, he briefly remarked: "You have overlooked the fourth of the Antrim towers—only a fragment, it is true—near the old church of Trummery." Imagine my mortification! I thought I had broken virgin soil. I said I must have been thinking of Clare, in the north of Munster, where I knew there were three round towers. He asked me to name them, and I said Drumcliffe, Dysart, and Kilnby, whereupon he remarked, "You have omitted a fourth, at Inniscaltra." This was scorching. I was the man who had spread a net for the bird. But I was not to be beaten. It seemed to me that four was the only sure number, so I said there were four fine round towers in the county of Dublin, every one of them at least a thousand years old. He said: "No, there are only three round towers there, probably in some cases more like three thousand years old." I took quite a dislike to Mr. Gladstone. I thought I would leave him and become a Tory. He knew too much for me. I could make a better figure under another leader. But I stayed on.

One day, the language being pure Sanscrit, we roamed in the park, and seemed to enjoy each other's society. Not a single reference did I make to the round towers of Ireland. It was not along that line that my fortune was to be made. In a tone of rare academic dignity Mr. Gladstone asked me if I remembered how India ranked in the inscriptions at Persepolis and Naksh-i-rustiam, and I said no doubt I did once know, but I had forgotten. He then said that, "according to Herodotus, India was the twentieth satrapy," but I never took much stock of anything Herodotus said. He was a washerwomany sort of historian. In a paragraph of noble eloquence Mr. Gladstone assured me that Dyanshpitar must be regarded as reflecting a primitive revelation, and I agreed with him, in order to get rid of the prickly subject, and then he went through all the gods in the Vedic pantheon until my mind reeled in positive blindness. In the middle of a magnificent sentence, of which I remember only the little insignificant words "Brahmanaspatic" and "Hiranygarbha," we were (at least, I was), happily humanised by a little child. A sweet little darling rushed up to Mr. Gladstone, and seized his hand by both her own. Then she burglariously thrust one hand into Mr. Gladstone's coat-pocket, and out of it brought two pieces of ginger-bread, three packets of barley-sugar, and a doll five inches long.

"These are for Dotty," said he.

"Now," said she, "let's sing 'Onward distian sojers.'" And her step became music.

I discovered it was the gardener's little child, and that the greatest of men made a pet of her. I then mentally resolved not to change my leader. I knew him then. I saw the Christ gleaming through his softened eyes, and my heart went out to him in a great wave of honest love.

In my journey back from Hawarden I got into the same compartment with Thomas Binney, the foremost Nonconformist minister of his day, and a clergyman joined us after a few stations. We knew by his dress that he was a clergyman. From topic to topic he jumped like a desultor, and at last he came to the subject of Dissent. Then he spake with his tongue. I quote the psalmist in one of his stormiest moods.

"How I should like to meet that man Binney!" said he. "I believe I should knock him down."

"Why?" said I.

"For his abuse of the Church."

"Oh, indeed; I thought he was a Christian minister," said Binney.

"He is a foul-mouthed Dissenter," was the snappish reply.

"You take a severe view of the case."

"I hate Dissent."

Then Mr. Binney referred to the country we were passing through, and by chance he mentioned Hawarden.

"Another man I should like to knock down," said the clergyman.

"Is he a Dissenter?" said the unrevealed and unsuspected Binney.

"He's a Liberal and a tyrant and a revolutionist."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. He would ruin the country if he had his way. A Churchman! He would disestablish the Church to-morrow if it suited his purpose."

"Do you think so? Is that the view of the clergy as a whole?"

"No. There are sneaks in all bodies. There are squashy boneless clergymen, but the most of the clergy hate Gladstone and all his ways."

Mr. Binney then talked about books, histories, poems, and the general outlook of England. He talked well, and the clergyman knew it.

"I know Mr. Binney," said I, "and I think you would like him if you knew him."

"Never."

"I am not so sure of that."

"I would gladly knock him down."

Mr. Binney went into the refreshment-room, and brought back two luncheon-baskets and a number of oranges, and asked the clergyman to join us.

"On one condition," said he.

"Well?"

"That if you ever come this way you will take pot-luck at the rectory. Here's my card."

Then we fell to. Mr. Binney told stories. All went happily. We were completely one in the broad humanities.

Another hour quickly passed, the conversation being lively and non-ecclesiastical. Then came the hand shaking, the adieus, the regrets. The clergyman got out, and just as the train was moving out of the station Mr. Binney handed his card to the cleric. He could not read it at once, as he had to search under his top-coat and another coat for his pince-nez, and by the time we were just outside the platform he shook his hand at Mr. Binney, who had kept his head steadily out of the window; but it was a friend's shake, ending in a wave of reconciliation and goodwill.

If men only knew one another better! If there were more luncheon-baskets!

NOTE X.

RAN down to Hughenden for a few days to see Ben Disraeli. I thought this only fair, after honouring Mr. Gladstone with so much of my attention. Fair's fair, even in politics. Disraeli would have felt it if he had known that I had spent so much time with Gladstone. I wondered on what subjects I should cram so as to floor the brilliant Jew, and set my contemptuous foot upon his white waistcoat. He was a striking-looking man, was Ben the brilliant —tall, spare, large-eyed, and ringleted in a small way. He seemed gratified to see me. I got up my own genealogy, and put into his hands the ancient charter, by which we reserved the right to hang ourselves if we felt so disposed: *Mandavinus enim ballivo libertatis predicte quod ad certos dies*, etc. Having glanced at this, Ben said I might sit down, and welcome. He said he had respect for the men of the Tyne, north and south. He asked me how things were getting on at the Devil's Water, and I said, "Pretty middlin'; hoo's yersel'?" He seemed puzzled. Incoherently I asked him what he thought of Monism, as I myself was deeply devoted to the unity of thought. He said if I would pick out the very smallest "damn" in the English language that would expressly convey his deliberate estimate of Monism. I then asked the great leader if he had ever been in a Dissenting chapel, and he blandly smiled.

"What on earth do the Dissenters want?" he inquired.

To which I answered:

"What on earth *don't* they want!"

We then settled down a moment.

"And how did you leave my illustrious rival?"

"I left him reading," said I.

"What! still reading?"

"Yes."

"And at what point is Brutus going next to put his knife into the Empire?"

"For the very reason that he is a Liberal, he thinks he is a true Conservative."

"Tush!"

"What are you prepared to give us, Mr. Disraeli?"

He turned up the whites of his eyes like the fabled Dissenter, and said:

"Confidentially, what would you like to have?"

"That's a large order, Mr. Disraeli."

"Name your policy."

"What do you really think we want?"

"You want all the revenues of the now Established Church to be handed over to you."

"Not for a moment."

"You want to unfrock all the bishops, and strut about in their cast-off lawn."

"Not a bit of it."

"You want to unchristianise the State.

"Never!"

"Well, that's what the squires think you want, and you touch them on a very tender point. You see, they are men of conscience. I dined with a dozen fox-hunting squires the other night, and one of them said, 'I'll be damned if they shall disestablish the Church.' He was very earnest. He has a living in his own disposal, which I believe he is keeping warm for his intended son-in-law. He thinks that disestablishment is but another name for Atheism."

"Poor old dog!" said I, perhaps too thoughtlessly.

"Why, even Gladstone would not disestablish the Church. Bishop-making is one of his ways of taking exercise. You never catch him hunting; you never heard of his moor-shooting in his native Scotland. He makes bishops and canons and deans. He is the biggest ecclesiastical founder we have."

"Yes; but even he says the *argument* for established churches is dead."

"And what do we care for argument? The House of Commons is not ruled by logic. We have an Established Church, and we mean to keep it."

I then passed on to his novels.

"And how did 'Lothair' go, on the whole?"

"Splendidly. All the countesses of England wept like a rainy day, and several duchesses broke forth into coruscations of wit, and, meteor-like, flamed through the nocturnal sky."

"Bless me!" said I.

"They love that sort of piety," he continued, "which appeals to the fancy without disturbing the conscience—a circumambient, empyrean, dreamy-blue piety—a rare sort, I admit, but I know a bank where the wild thing grows. When you want coruscation, drop me a line."

"I wonder, Mr. Disraeli," said I, "you have not worked up the Vedas into an English novel; there's material enough there."

"Yes; I have thought of it. The Brahmans (twiceborn men) would furnish an artist with a whole cast of characters. They were sensual, red-limbed, and divided into two sections—Kshatriyas and Vaisyas. These are names which fire my imagination."

I had taken portmanteau enough down for a week, but a prayer put an end to my scheme. Benjamin prayed at the family altar a prayer in which this passage occurred, "Give Thy servant travelling mercies on the morrow," by which sign I knew that the Manor was tired of me.

What a blessing to have a home to go to! I thought it too bad to send a hint to me in this roundabout way. But Ben was always mysterious. I have often noted that many prayers answer themselves, and that most prayers would do so if you would only let them alone. In this instance the God of Abraham saw fit to give me answer by immediate return.

What do I think of Mr. Gladstone? I think him the greatest Englishman of the century. He is massive, sincere, majestic. If he had humour he would be too good to live. Eagles don't laugh.

What a miserable trick in criticism it is to compare one man to another, and complain of him that he is not somebody else! Gladstone is unequal to Coleridge in the sense that a lion is not equal to an eagle. A lion cannot even flutter, much less fly; but there is meaning in the kindling of his eye.

Disraeli says, "What you please"; Gladstone says, "What I please." Two different policies. He who could unite them would be greater than either of the rivals.

Gladstone is not concise. Disraeli is very epigrammatic. Welldon, of Harrow, combines eloquence and pith. I never knew a man so felicitous in three-sentence speeches. I have heard him make a score of them in one day, and the last was always the best. He is a giant who can play at marbles. He has a huge muscle, but it is always pushing you into the dining-room or in some other comfortable direction. His muscle is your trusty friend.

NOTE XI.

WHAT opportunities ministers have of studying character under almost every variety of form and colour! I have kept a pen-and-ink album, from which I may take two examples.

There was Peter Short, who came into the world with great talents and went out of it with great disappointments. If Peter's mind had been as big as his voice, he would have been heard of. He spoke with a bow-wow which made those who did not know him think he must be a great man at home. And so fluent! At a committee-meeting he would "rise to order" twenty times, and twenty times would sit down amidst loud applause. But didn't he catch it at home! Didn't the ferret hunt the rat!

Robert Jones never opened his mouth at a committee-meeting, but silently commented on the speeches, and in going home in the omnibus, didn't he pour forth streams of criticism! He amended every resolution, snubbed every speaker, and made havoc of every policy. What wonder that in getting out of the omnibus he felt tired, and even persuaded himself that he had taken an active part in the official proceedings! He did, really. It was a psychological mystery. Without opening his mouth, he yet imagined that he had been talking all the time.

I may here remark that man is odd. I had a member of my congregation, many, many years ago, who could not attend evening services on account of the night air. That man got rich, and went into Parliament. And Parliament, I believe, sometimes sits at night. But, then, look at the difference between a Dissenting chapel and the House o' Commons! There's a lot o' lying done by respectable men.

The great stumbling-block in the way of Christian progress is the salary of the minister. I speak of the Dissenting churches. Church life has become too much a question of beg, beg, beg; morning, noon and night, the collection-box is forthcoming. Ministers may be gagged because of the salary. They would be stronger men but for the pay. And I say this without reflecting upon them. They have families. They deserve in many cases double what they get. And their people are always changing. It is right, too, that there should be collections. It is a poor religion that restrains or quenches its love. I know it. Yet somehow the Church is snowed up by circulars, appeals, cards, bazaars, boxes, weekly envelopes, pew-rent papers, and all sorts of begging apparatus. I do not see what is to be done to mitigate the case. The cure is not to be effected at the point of machinery: it could be effected at once, and gloriously, if every man would set aside one-tenth of his income for Christian purposes. There would be an end of all worrying, and there would be millions in the treasury of the Church.

Mr. Spurgeon, in view of preaching at the City Temple on Thursday morning, February 15, 1883, wrote thus:

> "*February* 10, 1883.
>
> "DEAR DR. PARKER,
>
> "You have crowned your kindness by inviting me to your hospitable home, and how gladly would I accept the invitation if I dared; but I must get you to repeat it, when I should feel easy in accepting it.
>
> "I must be at Tabernacle at six, and preach at seven on the Thursday, and I feel I could not do the work properly if I went home with you and back again in the interval. It would be an unalloyed pleasure to me, but the duty must stand first.
>
> "I do not feel myself so fresh and free at sermonising as in former days; I therefore have to be more careful in preparing.
>
> "I thank you with great earnestness for the many kind words which you have spoken about me. May you have a recompense from the Highest!
>
> "I do not feel at all well; but if I am to be ill, I hope it will be after Thursday. . . ."

Duty first. Yes; that was Mr. Spurgeon's motto, and it should be the motto of every honest man. The men who have failed are the men who have put duty second. The age we live in is lacking in discipline. Letter-carriers now smoke their way back to their offices after delivering the letters, but whilst they are yet wearing the Queen's uniform. As for work! The question now is, Why open shops? Why not have six half-holidays in the week? Why work more than four hours a day? I do not call this a good sign of the times. The men who will save England, and, indeed, save any country, are Adam Bede's successors. Thank God, we still have Adam Bedes in our labour camps—men who make work a religion and honesty a duty. There are working-men who are born gentlemen, children whose virtue and whose skill make labour an exalted profession. It is impossible for such men to scamp their work; they would have to unmake themselves before they could stoop to play the knave's mean game.

NOTE XII.

I HAVE had a wonderful talk with George Eliot. The real name is, as everybody knows, Mary Ann Evans. She used to be a Dissenter—quite a chapel-woman; but in due time she became too big for chapel and too wise for church. We got her to hear Mr. Spurgeon, and rare fun she made of him.

"Well," said I, "what were your impressions?"

"Never heard anything more utterly common and empty of guiding intelligence and emotion."

"But the voice?"

"Very fine—very flexible and various."

"And the doctrine?"

"It was a libel on Calvinism that it should be presented in such a form."

"You really think so?"

"Horribly destitute of insight. He never once touched the real ground of his subject."

"Then, what did he give you?"

"Plenty of anecdotes, poor and pointless—Tract Society anecdotes of the feeblest kind."

"Tut, tut! How you must have been disappointed!"

"Yes. His doctrine seemed to look no farther than the retail Christian's tea and muffins."

"Ay, ay! I was hoping you would be pleased."

"It was the most superficial grocer's back-parlour view of Calvinistic Christianity."

"You don't despise a back-parlour, I suppose, even if it is a grocer's?"

"Not necessarily."

"Adam Bede was not an aristocrat, nor Dinah, nor Mrs. Poyser, nor Silas Marner. I don't suppose any of them had a back-parlour."

"Don't mistake me," said Mary Ann; "it is quite possible to talk sense in a grocer's back-parlour."

"And quite possible," I added, "to talk nonsense in so fine a drawing-room as this."

Rude, no doubt. But I am gifted with a delicate faculty of slipping the guillotine through a man's neck without his feeling it. Do not think this gift is to be acquired. It is an original and incommunicable gift.

"Well," said I, "when Mr. Spurgeon's critics have done half the good he has done, I will listen with patience to what they have to say."

"But you cannot approve his theology?"

"As to his theology, I can only say that it is the ground and reason of all the grand service he has rendered. I would like you to remember that, if missionary societies have done any good, they owe their very existence to the kind of theology you despise."

"But have they done any good?" she asked.

"Madam," said I, "let us not discuss such a question. Let us try to agree in service if we cannot agree in doctrine. I want you, the brilliant author, the receiver of thousands, to give me a cheque for five hundred pounds to be distributed amongst the orphanages of London."

That stunned her. I saw the tears gather in her eyes—the eyes that shone that night of long ago. I continued:

"Nothing but the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth will go out after the lost. The Binomial theorem does not care a button about the souls of men. Your admiration of Beethoven's 'Andante' and the 'Moonlight Sonata' will little help the broken-hearted. Your holiday-making at the Burg von Schwaneck won't lift the cloud that darkens over weary lives, nor your rambling on the Mönchsberg, or over the hawkweed at places like Nymphenburg. All your chatter about Holbein's 'Madonna,' or Titian's 'Zinsgroschen,' or the works of Teniers, Ryckhart, Terburg, or Guido, amounts to nothing, if not indeed to base mockery, in view of the thousands who are drawn unto death. Come, woman, come, help the orphans that have never been painted by Rubens or Murillo!"

I thought she would have turned me out, but the angels were on my side, and they won. She gave me the cheque.

Oh the things that might have been! The angels that might have sung over the fields, and the charities that might have softened the hardships of life! Oh, to think of it! How rich the rich might make themselves, and how might the strong make mighty the sons and daughters of weakness! O life of mine, what thou, even thou in all thy littleness, mightest have done!

NOTE XIII.

WE have had a great meeting in the Mansion House to consider the best means of evangelising London. The Bishop of London presided. The Archdeacon moved the first resolution, and I seconded it. The resolution was to the effect that in face of the common enemy—unbelief, drunkenness, sensuality, gambling, and commercial immorality—it was high time for Christians to combine in a holy alliance, offensive and defensive, on behalf of the sovereignty of Christ. The Bishop of Rochester moved the next resolution, and the President of the Wesleyan Conference seconded it. Then Mr. Spurgeon prayed, and was followed by the Chairman of the Congregational Union in a most spiritual address, which deeply affected the whole assembly. The moment was most fortunate for a gentleman in the audience, who moved "That this assembly regrets all past differences, and pledges itself to unite in a great brotherhood to oppose the whole policy of the devil in whatever guise he might seek to ruin the world."

The Bishop of London took me aside at the close of the meeting, and shook hands most warmly.

"This," said he, "should have occurred years ago. Why, my dear brother"—a pressure of the hand—

"we are really one in heart, one in the supreme love, one in our sovereign purpose—never let us think evil of one another."

I then asked him if he would preach in the City Temple, and he instantly answered "Yes," and he came, and his word was with power, and the glory of the Lord filled the Temple. Nor was the blessing confined to our side, for the Church of England shared the overflowing life, and my neighbouring Rector held out both hands in token of masonry and thankfulness. Then was the word of the Lord exceedingly magnified, and great grace prevailed like a river over pastures dying with thirst. Of course, there was a great outcry from Worldliness, Gaiety, Fashion, Selfishness, Indifference and Unbelief, but that very cry we regarded as a proof that the Spirit of heaven had filled our obedient and grateful hearts.

Oh, the things that might have been! the landscapes that might have blossomed as orchards! the vines that might have grown wine for God!

Soon after this, who should I meet in Piccadilly but Charles Dickens! I told him the good news, and he rejoiced over it. "I hate all bigotry," said he, "and all uncharitableness. I have written a Life of Christ for my children, as well as a History of England, and when a child leaves me to go out into the world, I always give him or her a New Testament, and express the hope that every day some portion of it may be read. Who should join us but John Stuart Mill! He, too, was glad that prejudice had given way before reason. "Keep," said he, in a pathetic tone, "to Jesus of Nazareth, and nothing in the way of opposition can stand before you. Men may kill the literal Jesus, but they cannot kill his spirit. Socrates was put to death, but the Socratic philosophy rose like the sun in heaven, and spread its illumination over the whole intellectual firmament. Christians were cast to the lions, but the Christian Church grew up a stately and spreading tree, overtopping the older and less vigourous growths, and stifling them by its shade. These very words you will find in my new book on 'Liberty,' which will be out in a week or too."

It seemed to me that the kingdom of heaven had descended, and that men walked with angels. It was more and more a wonder to me that feud and war and blood and shame should have followed the Cross, and have been deemed essential to its progress. The bitterest enemies of Christ have been men who have borne His name. Only Christians can really hurt Christ. "And Judas knew the place"; the disciple tracked the footprints and brought the ruffians to their prey. Iscariot was deadlier than Herod.

I have mentioned the name of Charles Dickens, and done so with grateful affection. I know of no biography to compare with his, for I have not found a bitter word in it from first to last. All is sunshine—all is gentle humour. What patience he had with young authors! How he criticised, suggested, amended, and encouraged! I do not know of any minister who has taken equal pains with young preachers. Then, how Charles Dickens exerted himself to help poor artists and writers and widows! He was addicted to works of charity; he loved them, and therefore he found strength and time to do them. I shall be told that as an author he lived an idyllic life. Did he? This seems like it:

> "Divers birds sing here all day, and the nightingales all night. The place is lovely, and in perfect order. I have put five mirrors in the Swiss châlet (where I write), and they reflect and refract in all kinds of ways the leaves that are quivering at the windows, and the great fields of waving corn, and the sail-dotted river. My room is up among the branches of the trees, and the birds and the butterflies fly in and out, and the green branches shoot in at the open windows, and the lights and shadows of the clouds come and go with the rest of the company. The scent of the flowers, and, indeed, of everything that is growing for miles and miles, is most delicious."

Who would not be an author? Who would not have a châlet? Nothing easier: imagine characters, throw them into droll situations, get them into funny talk, add a stroke or two of pathos, and out comes the châlet—out comes the summer idyll!

My feeling is that the whole subject of preaching has to be reconsidered. Social conditions in general, and educational conditions in particular, have undergone changes whose influence must tell upon even the most venerable institutions. The pulpit is no longer secure when the Bible which provides its subjects is torn to pieces by a scholarship that is at once fearless and incomplete.

Do preachers, as a rule, expound the right Bible? That many do so is undoubted. Is there not a danger of so treating the Biblical letter as to miss the Biblical spirit, and thus drag down the practice of preaching to an inferior and unworthy level? I cannot but feel that the Bible is much more than an artistic mosaic of literature. The Bible cannot be bound by the limitations of technical grammar. Above the grammar stands the Revelation, the only judge of which is a good and honest heart. Do preachers remember this, or do they try to establish a species of book-idolatry?

My experience leads me to the conclusion that people are tired of hard and inexpansive dogma. They are not tired of truth, but of the absurd conception that the whole truth can ever be finally expressed in human words. Man is called to the patient quest of truth not to its complete acquisition. To love truth is orthodoxy; to put truth into cast-iron forms may be the worst unbelief. It is here that preaching must begin its own reform. Not in homiletic rules or artistic executions, but in spirit and purpose must preaching realise its fullest and divinest power. The purpose of preaching is to nurture the soul in goodness and to comfort the life in daily sorrow—such preaching will never fail to win the deepest and holiest confidence of human hearts.

Such a conception of preaching would at one stroke remove all the petty and frivolous criticisms which limit the best influence of the pulpit. We should hear no more about long sermons or heavy sermons or manufactured sermons; between the preacher and the hearer there would be an understanding strong in reason and grateful in feeling, resulting in a strenuous endeavour to be wise and good and kind. The preacher must get rid of Pope and priest out of his own heart if he is to lead the religious thought and the religious life of nations.

The pulpit is not the platform of the lecturer, nor is it the sphere of the controversialist; it is the place whence spiritual truth should issue generously from heart to heart. By this distinctiveness it releases itself from the humiliation and the embarrassment of all kinds and degrees of rivalry. Men should get from the Christian pulpit what they can get nowhere else in exactly the same way. In many other places they can get knowledge, wisdom, eloquence, argument, and even ethical appeal; but where else can they have their holiest consciousness so thoroughly illuminated or their deepest necessity so earnestly recognised? If the pulpit will persistently challenge what may be called competition with inferior educational ministries, it must abide by the arbitrament which it has invoked; whereas, if it will do its own unique work after an apostolic model, it will wield an undisputed and incalculable influence for good.

In forecasting the course of English preaching, I cannot but feel how much depends upon the training and equipment of preachers. First of all, there must be evident capacity and enthusiasm on the part of students themselves. In the next place, the educators of preachers must be men who can inspire students with a noble conception of the possibilities of preaching as an educational and reforming instrument. In the third place, the Church itself must realise that it is entrusted with a vital message, a sublime and eternal revelation, which it did not invent, and which it dare not pervert. Not what the preacher conjectures, but what the Spirit reveals, must be the substance, as it will certainly be the strength, of every pulpit message.

NOTE XIV.

If I were asked to name the most memorable public occasion in which I have taken part, I should name the time when I delivered the eulogy on Henry Ward Beecher in the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Here is some of it:

The task which has been assigned me would be less of an honour were it less of a burden. It overweights me; it brings back all my tears; yet in undertaking it I yield to a fascination which is simply irresistible, for I feel that my movement towards the discharge of this sacred trust is in rhythm with those wider movements which work out the mystery of special fitness, and finally express themselves in the music of proportion and harmony. Were some other man to claim this honour, on the ground of superior genius, he should have it instantly, with my heart's absolute consent; but no man shall take it from me on the plea of larger love. There I should resist the impossible plea with a positiveness redeemed from perversity by a homage without a flaw, and a devotion undistracted by those pedantic and fastidious criticisms which, though intended to mark the impartiality, and perhaps the superiority, of the critic, destroy all that is inspiring in eulogy, and all that is magnanimous in justice. To my task I bring an entire love. If love may speak, my speech is ready; if love is genius, I claim to be called upon first; and the fact that each of us would claim priority only shows that the sainted name which we memorialise to-day works like a spell upon our imagination and our reverence, and is in the keeping of universal love. To-day our gracious task is eulogy. By-and-by there may arise critics who have every gift but inspiration, and every grace but generosity, who will reduce the unconscious exaggerations of our homage by the recollection of faults which they themselves embody, and by the calculated and artistic enlargement of infirmities which will insure their fluency by first recalling their experience. To-day we pay the toll of love; to-day we bring an offering of flowers, gathered from gardens far and near, and tended by men to whom flowers are symbols and poems; to-day we do more than all this, for we first magnify God in His servant, and account all eulogy worthless that is not first religious. Mere eulogy is a waxen flower, that melts in the hand that proudly grasps it; but true eulogy is a living flower, rooted alike in earth and sun. Our crowned friend was what he was by the grace of God, by the power of Christ, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. We best praise the human by recognising the Divine. So if we are not critics, neither are we idolators. In this instance—the more significant and inclusive because of its conspicuousness—our human love comes out of our Divine worship, and our Divine worship, in proportion to its intelligence and purity, enables us to see how much divinity there is in every human life—in the poorest, weakest, saddest life, and in the life that throbs and glows in the creators of prophecies and poems. I speak not inferentially, but with definite personal information, when I say that our ascended friend would repel, perhaps with scorn, certainly with indignation, every eulogy which God did not first sanction, and would love that eulogy best which gratefully and reverently magnified the eternal glory of the Son of God.

NOTE XV.

As an Englishman, I claim, in this labour of love, an advantage which no American can yet enjoy. Three thousand miles may be said to represent not only a distance of locality, but what is almost equivalent to a distance of time—that distance so essential to true colour, proportion, and perspective—the distance which gets rid of the detail, the friction, and the tumult which cannot but vex the eyes with cross lights, and perplex the judgment with the clamour of importunate contentions. Three thousand miles away we saw only the outline of a noble figure, heard only a clarion tongue, beheld only the wizardry of a superb imagination, and wondered only at a scope and power of prayer, together constituting a unique personality, which, with hallowing effect, touched at once our reverence and our reason. We saw results, and knew next to nothing of processes. We thrilled under the sacred symphony, and yet were spared the tuning of the instrument. In the criticism, therefore, of a man like Mr. Beecher, Christian Englishmen are enabled to make history before the time, and to award honour as if with the serenity of accumulated years; whilst some of the men in his own country, as to whose ability and sincerity there cannot be a shadow of honest doubt, are yet unable to escape the limitations of locality and vision. We must stand away from the mountain if we would see its magnitude. Criticism that is attempered by admiring memory is not bound by the vulgarity of the naked eye. With this advantage I undertake my work. The Atlantic did for England what time will do for America. How much was lost on that "great and wide sea" we cannot tell; perhaps something of exaggeration, something of arbitrariness, something of that sudden impulse which often associates itself with more or less of what appears to be defiance and recklessness; we cannot tell. It was lost at sea; so when the ship touched land, we heard only a true preacher, and saw only a brother and a friend. Distance of this kind reveals, not enlarges, native greatness. The greatness is there —there by birth, there by Divine decree—awaiting the impartial exposition and vindication of time. The solemn centuries—silent priests—anoint and enthrone the kings of God. Bunyan is greater today than ever; the "soft raiment" of his dream has given him right of way into "kings' houses." Milton was never so visible in all the outlines of spiritual majesty. Shakespeare communes with the total world. This is part of the work of time. In some Atlantic—of time or space—must men's eccentricities and foibles be lost, that their greatness may be without encumbrance or distortion. About living men we have opinions; about dead men we have judgments, but they must in very deed be dead, and dead a long time—so dead as not to hear one word of praise; so dead that what we see is rather a wraith than a palpable body. They must be dim, far-away shadows—spectres, spirits, coming and going at midnight as at midday, taking up no space, disputing no ambitions, awakening no resentments by active rivalry ; so dead that we can get no credit for magnanimity by praising them. We believe in deferred gratitude. Where we have begrudged bread, we may lavish epitaphs.

There is not a little in the very genius of America and its sovereign democracy that confirms and accounts for the sonship of its most illustrious citizens : they are not merely residents or inhabitants or productive lease-holders ; they are part and parcel of its very substance and destiny ; their uniqueness is incommunicable ; of precedent, patented usage, and ceremonial status they know nothing ; they are free, independent, fearless, and if now and then too irreverent of the past, it may be that their irreverence is simply a recoil from the superstition which canonises custom, and makes an idol of antiquity. America is emphatically the *new* world ; in conception, in enterprise, in impulse, in eternal hopefulness, it is uniquely and vitally new. Geographically, America was long the puzzle of the world. From the time when a handful of Arab sailors went forth from Portugal in search of it to this day, America has had about it somewhat of the mystery and fascination of an unsolved problem. Politicians and statesmen of the old-world and reactionary type are still alarmed by transatlantic dash and fire and many-headed democracy. They have long prophesied ruin for America, yet America lives and thrives, and tells the modern Jeremiahs to dry their tears—an exhortation that fails of effect because of its bantering and jocund tone. Then, too, there is to British Islanders something overpowering in the mere size of America—something of infinite shadow and infinite weight. Every morning Europe awakens to renew its disappointment that there is not a revolution in America. You have no crown, no king, no State Church, no standing army, in the European sense ; yet you live and work, and do good and prosper. To European old age and propriety this is an outrage. Here you have adopted the revolting doctrine that a man should go for what he is worth. You care no more for the Plantagenets than you care for the plesiosaurus, and you often act (not always) as if you had no more regard for blue blood than you have for a triassic reptile or an entomostraceous king-crab. How can any European commend this? What does the true American care for tinctured shields, field-argents, the lines used in arms—as the engrailled, the invected, the crenelle, the nebule, the regule, or the dancette? You have no primogeniture and entail, no House of Lords, no titular aristocracy ; yet yours are the vital and noble conditions which make Henry Ward Beechers possible. Henry Ward Beecher never could have been in Europe what he was in America. You gave him scope ; you created opportunities for him ; your journals multiplied his influence ; your whole people applauded and consolidated his independence. We must never forget what the nation did for the man, even when we remember most gratefully what the man did for the nation. America (it is not too much to say) redresses the balance of nations by showing that Cæsarism is neither necessary to greatness nor required for security. A free country grows free men, and free men honour the responsibilities of liberty.

Among the superstitions which may be forgiven —more ancient even than the College of Augurs—is the one which reads mysterious writing in times and seasons and in circumstances which seem at first to have no bearing upon the issue. "What time the star appeared," is an inquiry which even fabled auguries cannot discredit; it is born of the instinct which makes augury possible. I cannot but think it was well that Henry Ward Beecher was a child of Midsummer, coming amongst men when the days were the longest and the whole ground was carpeted with flowers. His name might have been Midsummer. Out of that season he never passed; it was always June 24 with this child of light. The snow that lay upon him was the snow of blossoms. He came to earth in summer; he went to heaven in spring. Whenever he came amongst men, he brought June sunshine and music, and made even desponding and surly men feel that a fuller and warmer summer—the "kingdom of heaven" itself—was "at hand." Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight—and in our sight it is beautiful.

That little house in Litchfield was not much of a nest for such an eaglet. I have seen it only on paper, and there certainly the manse is not palatial in elevation or in compass. Yet in it there was an altar, a Bible, and a secret gate that opened immediately upon heaven. The fresh air got well around it, and the birds sang in the trees which waved above its sunny roof. Lyman, his father, and Roxana, his mother, were enough to account for any genius, for their spiritual quality was purely aristocratic, and enough to account for any goodness, for they held large daily commerce with heaven. It was a crowded little house when the father, the mother, and the ten children were all in it, and blithe, too, as well as crowded—a bloodless arena where gladiators fought for old theologies and new, and then prayed themselves into a holy Catholic Church. Opinion divides; prayer unites. Henry soon became a great proprietor. He had no land, but he had boundless landscape, every inch his own by the right of love. He had great friendship amongst trees and birds and squirrels and flowers, and soon he came into possession of a sacred territory, even the grave of his mother. At three years of age that holy land became his, and he only dropped the title-deeds in March last, when he himself was tenderly laid in the unrocked cradle of the grave. To his mother, Henry was three years old to the end—quite a babe—wanting no larger room than his mother's breast. Over the early years we cannot linger. As the panorama moves we see him at ten at a private school, which he left after one year, a bad writer, an unpardonable speller, and a young thief in Latin; then at a ladies' school, the only boy among forty girls, yet submissive and uncomplaining; then, for a brief period, at Litchfield again, and presently at Boston—that isthmus which, in the imagination of envious persons, connects heaven and earth, with great condescension towards the latter and some impatience; then we watch him seeking Christ, and finding Him in the awakening and fragrant woods one sunny morning in May. Only a pen equal to his own could describe that vernal vision, for he fluently spoke the native language of woods and gardens. To him field-maple and adder's-tongue, wood-anemone and wall-rue, great bindweed and limestone-polypody, were as common as daisy and buttercup and dog-rose are to us. Born in June, born again in May, born into heaven in spring—how well this child of summer missed the freezing winter! Soon after that never-to-be-forgotten sunny morning in May, Henry went to Amherst College. From Amherst College to Lane Seminary—not cemetery, for Lyman Beecher was there; from Lane to Lawrenceburgh on the Ohio River; from Lawrenceburgh to Indianapolis, and after eight years to Plymouth Church. So the panorama moves, and so the little one became a thousand, and the small one a strong nation. A singular panorama, too. Look at him! A phrenologico-philosopher at Amherst; a heretico-theologian at Lane; a shepherd of twenty souls (reckoning nineteen women under this general term) at Lawrenceburgh; a farmer-preacher at Indianapolis; and, finally, a king, whose throne was in Plymouth Church, and whose sceptre touched the uttermost parts of the earth. What wonder if we long to show our pride in him, and our gratitude to God for a gift so great! In one of the last sermons he preached, Mr. Beecher said: "When a distinguished author or actor upon the scenes of life has gone, there is hardly anything men are more fond of than to look in upon the secret operation of his mind, to discern exactly what his genius was." That is part of our task to-day, the greater part being to become so enamoured of his character as to endeavour to reproduce it according to our several ability.

NOTE XVI.

I AM not aware that any man ever questioned Mr. Beecher's divine right to be a preacher. About the vocation of some men there may have been a kind of incertitude struggling with charity, a degree of scepticism mitigated by reluctant hopefulness; but in Mr. Beecher's case the verdict was unanimous and emphatic. He looked a preacher, and not the less so than he looked a man. He excited no sentiment by pale sickliness of complexion. No anxiety was felt about his lungs when that sonorous and stormy voice denounced the gambler, the sensualist, the pleasure-lover, and the drunkard, in those ardent lectures to young men dedicated to his father, which elicited the warmest commendations from the professors, the judges, the pastors, the editors, of America. For fiery eloquence, Mr. Beecher never surpassed those lectures, though he may have changed and ennobled his style, as Macaulay drew away from the early essay on Milton toward the calmer mood of his Addison, his Bunyan, and his Goldsmith. It was the comparatively young Beecher that thundered in those lectures, and that forewarned the world that no evil could protect itself against the lightning of just indignation. Mr. Beecher's discourses were unique in their intellectual range, though not free from a certain monotony of conception and even form.

Other men have occasional power; now and again they can soar high, and work miracles in thought and eloquence; some invisible moon brings up the tide of mental energy; they make supreme efforts, and suffer days after in consequence of unusual expenditure of force. They thus amaze themselves and amaze others, and are pensively inquired about as men who are hardly expected to recover from their infinite fatigue. Mr. Beecher was great without toil, mighty without exhaustion, and so redundant were his pulpit miracles that they were in danger of being treated as commonplaces. Other men's sermons were but his introductions. Where they said "Amen," to their own relief and the delight of many, he said "Firstly"; when they had given out all their bread, he began to load the tables with intellectual luxuries drawn from every field and vineyard accessible to pulpit genius. Then the monotony of the mere framework or outline was forgotten in the multitude and vividness of the illustrations, which turned abstract truth into concrete pictures. Mr. Beecher had a supreme gift of language, as was betokened by his planet-like eyes—eyes as full as Shakespeare's, as radiant as Gladstone's, as expressive as Garrick's. In the use of words he was a necromancer, unconsciously so to a large extent, for he never knew how well he was expressing himself. Yet to limit his eloquence to his words were either ignorance or injustice. Fluency in a preacher is often a disease; in some instances it is a crime—always a crime when it deposes conscience, and prefers its own windiness to honest painstaking. Mr. Beecher's eloquence was like the fluency of the Atlantic—a constant motion, a mysterious depth, an infinite caress, or an infinite assault. Of our sainted friend it may be truly said that his thoughts were greater than his language. Every word had its own tint of intellectual beauty; every sentence its own freight of rich meaning; every sermon its gallery of pictures or its galaxy of stars. His words were innumerable, because his thoughts were countless. We have had great preachers in England—such as Donne, the poet-preacher, of whom Bishop Lightfoot says: "Nothing can be more direct or more real than his eager, impetuous eloquence when he speaks of God, of redemption, of heaven, and of the bountifulness of Divine love;" such as Isaac Barrow, of whom Dr. Wace says: "He emerges from every sermon a victor over some form of sin or error with which he has been in mortal combat"; such as Jeremy Taylor, whom Coleridge calls "the most eloquent of *divines*—if I said of *men* Cicero would forgive me, and Demosthenes nod assent"; such as Chalmers, of whom Canning said, "The Tartan beats us all." We are proud of such men, with a pride which is based on reason. But Mr. Beecher stood apart from them by the very fact that whilst they purchased their pulpit eminence by great expenditure of effort, he was evidently freeborn. He toiled not, nor did he spin, yet the ornate pomp and classic unity of others were not to be compared with his artless simplicity. Happily this panegyric can be tested by the sermons themselves; there they stand in thirty volumes. Look where you may, you will find that not even the printer, that cruellest extinguisher of pulpit eloquence, has been able to quench their abounding vitality. Artistic preachers work literary miracles on paper; they make words run into curious moulds, and take the impress of passing eccentricity. Now the words are plain prose, now they fall into irregular measure, now they are almost poetical, and again they are almost unintelligible; but everywhere the cunning hand is seen, the rasping file is heard, the process of cloud-making is patent, and the allotment of the gilded pebbles that are to play the part of stars is a trick that can be followed by the naked eye. Nothing mechanical have I yet discovered in Mr. Beecher's preaching. It is eloquent breathing; sound of hammer or trowel there is none. Call it a perennial fountain, call it a growing harvest, call it a brightening summer day, and your figure will not be remote from the phenomenal reality; but never liken that preaching to any work of art or man's device. It were easier to make an Athenian god than to give a mechanical model of an inspired sermon.

It is not too much to say that to many preachers Mr. Beecher's method gave a new conception of the possibility of preaching. The whole idea of the sermon was enlarged. A sermon was no longer an analysis of words, a dreary creation and distribution of particulars, a pedantic display of learned ignorance, an onslaught (tremendous in feebleness) upon absent doubters and dead infidels; nor was it a pious whine, an inoffensive platitude, an infantile homily, or a condiment for delicate souls. It was an amazing combination of philosophy, poetry, emotion, and human enthusiasm—all centered in Christ, and all intended to bring men into right relations with the Father. The sermon was not an object to be gazed at, but a Gospel to be received —a Divine Gospel addressed to the sinful, the broken-hearted, the lost, the hopeless. It was a message from heaven ; a message for all lands, all times, all souls ; a message whose moral majesty lost nothing on account of its human sympathy, but gained the more by reason of its tender tears and its eager importunity. In Mr. Beecher's hands the sermon never affrighted men, never froze men, never repelled men. It was the loveliness of love, the very heart of sympathy, the very condescension of God. Nor, though so rich in sentiment, was it ever weak. Behind all the tears there was a reason that had adopted its conclusions in the daylight, a philosophy that weighed evidence in scales of righteousness, an intellectual audacity that tried the spirits—whether they were of God. It was not merely because a bush was on fire that Mr. Beecher was awestruck, but as soon as he recognised the divinity of the Voice which addressed him he put off his shoes, uncovered his head, and listened with the reverence of reason and the holy jealousy of love. In Mr. Beecher's sentiment there was no feebleness. His were the tears of a strong man ; his were the sympathies of a lion heart. Those who magnify dogma above sentiment regret the omission of dogma from his sermons. I have not been struck by any such omission. I prefer the living body to the ghastly skeleton. In the living body the skeleton, as to its anatomy, is covered, but every bone is there—there, not to affright, but to help all the offices and all the graces of life. The anatomist has his duties, but they are not in the pulpit. To know God, to love God, to accept Christ, to serve Christ, to magnify Christ, to grow in grace, in knowledge, and its truth; to be pure, wise, gentle, sympathetic, were the glowing dogmas which gave this immortal ministry its strength and glory. Yet there were minor lines in the Beecher sermon which a complete criticism must recognise. The sermon was often alive with the eager spirit of the day, and came sometimes near to being a Sunday editorial upon the supreme question of the moment. Then it accepted the felicitous assistance of humour, and grieved those who know not the uses to which irony and satire and banter may be put even on Sunday. The humour was often in the tone, often in the luminous smile, often in the eloquent eye. It was like the ministry of dew in nature: it added something to the rarest beauty, and multiplied the sunflash that fell on it like a blessing. God Himself made Henry Ward Beecher a humourist, gave him a taste for comedy, and enriched him with the grace of playfulness. He prayed the better that he laughed so well. His tears were the tenderer, because his humour was so spontaneous and abundant. He never laughed at truth, at virtue, at piety, at poverty, at helplessness. He laughed at the fools who undertook to roll back the ocean, to grasp the infinite, and to be themselves the God whose existence they denied.

NOTE XVII.

BUT was not this brilliant orator sometimes considered to be uncertain in his theological position? Was he not heretical? unorthodox? irregular? Before answering the question I should like to know who puts it. Who are the custodians of orthodoxy? Who are the divinely-appointed sentinels of truth? I am prepared at once to own that Mr. Beecher's theology was impatient of system, form, or whatever looked like finality. He disliked all narrowness, sectarianism, and heresy-hunting. I will go further, and say that we did not always know where Mr. Beecher was in his theological thinking. Some of us could not follow him when he entered the radiant cloud and passed out of our sight, because some of us have no wings, and even those in whom there are budding pinions can only flutter, never fly. The microscope should find no fault with the telescope, though the one can never do the work of the other. Mr. Beecher's theological speculation was telescopic. He never returned to us to report that the universe is much smaller than he had supposed it to be, and that God is infinitely farther away than the wings of dream and hope can carry the inquiring soul. He always came back to announce that we know only in part. He said in effect that in the universe of Truth, horizon beyond horizon stretches in unimaginable range and splendour, constellation above constellation burns in solemn glory, and system within system rolls in silent light, compared with whose magnificence all that we know of day and summer is but a mitigation of darkness. How he himself shone like an intellectual planet as he told of the largeness of life and growth and destiny, and typified in fullest hospitality of sympathy the love which educates the universe towards completeness and liberty ! When he came back to announce in his brilliant lectures on Evolution and Religion that he had become an Evolutionist, it was with no pride of intellect that he made the announcement, but with the delight of a child who had seen how many mansions there are in his Father's house, and with what infinite sublimity the economy of the universe is constructed and administered. An evolved creation heightened his religious wonder, and led him to magnify God in loftier and tenderer praise. He liked, perhaps, to be "the first that ever burst into the silent sea" of theological or philosophical speculation, not that he might boast of his adventure, but that he might tell what new mountains he had seen, and what infinite corn-land there is yet to be utilised for the soul's nourishment. His was the genius of abundance, of plentifulness, of inexhaustible riches. For this reason men of all capacities thronged to his ministry, for he had a portion of meat for each, and a masonic word which each could understand. Hence his pulpit was not a dog-kennel in which pedantic theology snarled and barked, but a specular tower from which the stars were watched; not a custom-house in which men paid toll and tax, but a home in which men rested in a consciousness of Divine security; not a *nisi prius* court in which creation was broken up into details and precedents, but a sanctuary in which men could commune with the Infinite Spirit, the Eternal Father, the World-redeeming Son. A man might deny Mr. Beecher's formal orthodoxy, and think that in doing so he was doing God service; but if any man (I know none such) could question Mr. Beecher's orthodoxy of heart, I should say of that man that he is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

In this connection we may fitly remember Mr. Beecher's power in prayer. His prayers were printed, a fact which surprised and annoyed many English Christians, who forgot for the moment that David's prayers are printed, and Christ's and Paul's and that some churches pray only the prayers which are already in print. Mr. Beecher's prayers have helped the devout life of many. They have made many ministers strong. They have brought comfort to many a sick chamber. They have enlarged the general conception of public worship. The "Imitatio Christi," on which devout souls not a few have lived for centuries, is so self-absorbed as to be chargeable with distinct spiritual selfishness; not hesitating to say, "Love to dwell alone with thyself," "Desire communion with none," "Remove thyself far away from acquaintances and dear friends." There is no touch of the cenobite in Mr. Beecher's grand, catholic, divine-human communion.

Pascal, in his immortal "Pensées," has portrayed himself. His "Remains" are the children of his latter days—days marked by exquisite suffering and by the premature decay of a short and crowded life. Mr. Beecher's prayers were as healthy as his life, as mountain-like in their freshness as his intellectual energy, and as tender as the love which is still young and passionate. From all who have specially undertaken the culture of the devout life, Mr. Beecher's devotional exercises differ in their marvellous union of intellectual and spiritual power. They belong to no locality, to no sect, to no one period of time; they are universal, experimental, pathetic, and rich with all the elements of chastened wisdom. Critics who find omissions in his sermons will find none in his prayers. He ever hears

"In the low chant of wakeful birds,
In the deep weltering flood,
In whispering leaves, the solemn words—
'God made us all for good.'"

NOTE XVIII.

All this we had known about Mr. Beecher merely by public and private report, for we had never looked upon the man or heard the tones of his voice. But our opportunity came: in 1863 Mr. Beecher visited England, being then in his fifty-first year. It is not my intention to follow him in his public exposition of the principles which underlay the Civil War—from London to Manchester and Glasgow, and Edinburgh and Liverpool—but to fix attention for a moment upon one particular occasion as illustrative of the main features of his British campaign. I was then located in Manchester, and was one of the vice-presidents of the Union and Emancipation Society. On Friday, October 9, 1863, Mr. Beecher addressed a meeting in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. Great was the preparation made for that memorable occasion. An organised opposition had taken possession of part of the hall; six thousand people crowded the noble auditorium. The only self-possessed man in the seething mass was Mr. Beecher himself. There he stood, when his turn came to speak, about five feet six or seven inches high, ruddy and of a fair countenance, abundant brown hair falling back from a head which indicated high reason, fine imagination, noble moral power; large solemn eyes that calmly took in the whole animated occasion, and a contour which altogether betokened dominance, capacity, and passion well-controlled. It was evident that he was going to read his speech, for he unfolded a large scroll of manuscript and proceeded to lay it upon the desk. " Mr. Chairman," said he, and instantly the hiss and groan of opposition were heard. " Mr. Chairman ;" and again the angry storm mingled with the enthusiastic and reverberating cheers. In a moment Mr. Beecher's whole aspect changed. He was determined to " mount the whirlwind and direct the storm," so, advancing still nearer the front of the platform—I see him, I hear him now—he exclaimed : " My friends, we will have an all-night session, but we will be heard ! "

That suited the English temper, for it is a splendid temper when downright fair play is in question, and the whole audience broke out into a thunder of applause, which plainly said, " Heard you shall be, though the enemy be hurled into the murky night." The manuscript was folded up, put into the pocket, and for two hours the inspired orator spoke, expounded, appealed, fought, and conquered, and then sat down in such a storm of cheers as probably cannot be heard out of England. When Sheridan concluded his immortal speech at the trial of Warren Hastings, Edmund Burke said there was no department of rhetoric which could not be illustrated by splendid quotations from that brilliant harangue. It would be hardly too much to say the same of the speeches of Mr. Beecher during his visit to England in 1863. With Pauline astuteness he conciliated his English audiences by exclaiming: "We bring back American sheaves, but the seed-corn we got in England—and if in a larger sphere, and under circumstances of unobstruction, we have reared mightier harvests, every sheaf contains the grain that has made old England rich for a hundred years." "The same blood is in us; we are your children, or the children of your fathers and ancestors. . . . Never were mother and daughter set forth to do so queenly a thing in the kingdom of God's glory as England and America."

In that eloquent conciliation we saw the man of high sagacity. Then again he changed his tone, and said: "We ask no help and no hindrance. If you do not send us a man, we do not ask for a man. If you do not send us another pound of gunpowder, we are able to make our own powder. If you do not send us another musket or another cannon, we have cannon that can carry five miles already."

In that calculated banter we saw that he carried a sword as well as a scabbard. When, after a minute historical statement, he said: "You have been pleased to say in this address that I am one of the pioneers. No! I am only one of their eldest sons. The Birneys, the Baileys, the Rankins, the Dickeys, the Thoms, of the West; the Garrisons, the Quinceys, the Slades, the Welds, the Stuarts, the Tappans, the Goodalls, of the East—these were the pioneers," we saw the man who would never enjoy an honour at the expense of others, or deprive another man of the honour which was his due. When, in a whirlwind of wrath, he exclaimed: "Then came that ever-memorable period when the Fugitive Slave Bill was passed. Against that infamy my soul revolted, and these lips protested, and I defied the Government to its face, and told them, 'I will execute none of your unrighteous laws; send to me a fugitive who is fleeing from his master, and I will step between him and his pursuer,'" we saw the philanthropist who was neither to be bribed nor threatened into silence. And when he added, in a tone worthy of the statement, "Not once, nor twice, have my doors been shut between oppression and the oppressed; and the church itself over which I minister has been the unknown refuge of many and many a one," we felt that he conferred upon Plymouth Church a fame prouder than the renown which had been created for it by his own matchless eloquence; and when, in a temporary lull in the stormy meeting, he said, "You are impatient; and yet God dwelleth in eternity, and has an infinite leisure to roll forward the affairs of men; not to suit the hot impatience of those who are but children of a day, and cannot wait or linger long, but according to the infinite circle on which He measures time and events," we felt that we were listening to the magician who had so often lured us into that sanctuary in which alone true judgments can be formed.

His speeches in other cities were as energetic and eloquent, and were as abundantly punctuated with the cries of an angry but impotent opposition, and the impression that he everywhere created was that he was a patriot and a statesman—not the hireling, but the shepherd of his nation. Could his compatriots know what Mr. Beecher did for America in that unparalleled campaign, no marble in Carrara would be too fine for them to buy and carve, that his bust—classical in an artistic eye—might fill the proudest niche in the proudest temple of his country. Macaulay has described Westminster Abbey as the great Temple of Reconciliation ; and such a temple America has, if not in fretted vault and long-drawn aisle, in the magnanimity in which she buried the memory of her strife, and in the sacred liberty which guards and leads her growing millions. I speak the language of the coldest sobriety when I say that in my opinion no nation can be, or has been, so frankly magnanimous as the great nation of America. When, at Henry Ward Beecher's funeral, an ex-Confederate General walked side by side with a typical African, the stormy past was known to have fled for ever away, and all nations seemed to have come nearer to the holy Sabbath.

"When the war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle-flag is furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world."

Mr. Beecher paid a second visit to England in 1886. On that occasion Mr. and Mrs. Beecher were my guests. His reception was enthusiastic throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Wherever he preached the largest churches were utterly inadequate to the accommodation of the people, who completely blocked all the adjacent approaches. Nor was mere admiration elicited. On every hand the expressions were inspired by religious appreciation and thankfulness, so much so that Mr. Beecher himself was simply amazed at the unanimity and extent of the recognitions of his ministry by pastors, students, and preachers of nearly every Christian communion. In many a group of ministers have I seen Mr. Beecher standing as a father, giving and receiving blessing. When he left the churches where he had been preaching crowds surged around him, accosting him in many grateful words, asking to shake hands with him, and on week-days cheering him loudly as he drove away. All this meant something in slow-moving, conservative England. That Mr. Beecher was not received merely by his own denomination, or by any clique of friends, will be proved when I tell you that he was hospitably entertained by American residents in London and the provinces ; also by the Lord Mayor of London, the London Congregational Board, an Association of Ministers in Glasgow, the Congregational District Board of Liverpool, and by a general meeting of ministers in Belfast ; and it will be further proved when I tell you that the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone invited Mr. Beecher to hospitality, and that amongst those who wrote to him, attended his services, welcomed him, or in some other way expressed their interest in him, were Lord Iddesleigh, the Dean of Westminster, the Dean of Canterbury, Archdeacon Farrar, Canon Wilberforce, Canon Fleming, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Ellen Terry, Henry Irving, Sir John Lubbock, George Jacob Holyoake, Professor Tyndall, Herbert Spencer, and innumerable members of Parliament. Of all the meetings, I think the assembly of students in the City Temple, London, on Friday morning, October 15, 1886, was the most remarkable. The rain descended in torrents, yet nearly 3,000 ministers, professors, students, and visitors thronged the building. College classes were suspended; professors and students crowded the same pew, and not a few venerable pastors had to be content with camp-stools in the aisles of the church. Never was Mr. Beecher more elevated in thought, more eloquent in expression, more tender in feeling, and never did I see a multitude of earnest men more thoroughly excited with Christian joy than when, in their name and at their bidding, I, as chairman of the meeting, offered Mr. Beecher the right hand of fellowship in token of thankfulness, reverence, and love. You will not overlook the fact that all this spontaneous and enthusiastic homage was rendered to Mr. Beecher by men who had followed him through his whole career. They knew him, his ministry, his books, his public controversies, his honours, and his sorrows; they knew who had stood by him, who had withdrawn from him, who had slandered him, and who had trusted him, and, knowing all, they recognised in him not only an eloquent speaker and a powerful thinker, but an able minister of the New Testament, and a loyal follower of the Son of God.

Mr. Beecher was a prophet who had honour in his own country. That honour culminated in the tributes paid to his memory ere he was carried to his grave. When we heard of the transformation of Plymouth Church into a paradise as the dead body of the immortal preacher lay there, we said, "Surely this man was a poet, or so lovely a crown would not have been fashioned in his honour." When we heard the muffled drums and the measured tramp of soldiers, and saw the furled and draped banners, and watched 500 men march to the house of death, we said, "Surely a soldier has fallen—a man, an officer, of whom his comrades were proud." When we heard of the Legislature, the Senate, and the Assembly adjourning, we said, "Surely this man was a politician and a statesman—a citizen of high sagacity, a patriot of untainted name." When we saw Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Jews, and Papists hastening to lay their flowers on his bier, we said, "Surely this man had burst the unholy thralls of sect, and had entered into the liberty of Christ." And when we saw the coloured clergymen of Brooklyn bowed down with sacred grief as they resolved to participate in the honours of the memorial, we said, "Surely this man was a philanthropist and an emancipator of his brethren." So he was. He was poet, and soldier, and statesman, and a deliverer of bondsmen. He was great in every aspect—great when he spoke in the name of the United Nation at Sumter; great when he denounced the sin of slavery; great when he opened his mouth for the dumb; great when he called his mutilated country back to brotherhood and mutual trust; great in prayer; great in suffering; great when he pronounced the matchless eulogy on Grant—always great. "Know ye not that a prince and a great man is fallen in Israel?" "Howl, fir-tree; for the cedar is fallen!" "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" "I pray Thee let a double portion of Thy Spirit be upon me!"

Who has not, on returning from long and varied travel, found lingering in his memory not the whole landscape, with its hills and shores, but little pictures of beauty which perhaps other eyes have never seen in quite the same way. Twenty companions may have returned from the same tour in Alpine lands, yet each has his own story to tell of morning glory and evening pomp, of ice-cliff and glacier-table, of gorge and torrent; they admit the universal grandeur, but select the individual beauty. The Arveiron plunging in a cascade down the rocks is one traveller's heart-memory; another saw the moon make love to the Märgelin See, and insists that to have missed that is to have missed everything; another forgets every sight in the unsullied snow of the Jungfrau; and a fourth declares that his feeling was most acute and rapturous, not when he saw the Æggischorn or the Gorner, but when he stood beside the humble cradle of the Danube in the solitudes of the Black Forest. It is precisely the same in the review of any great life. Every man who knew Mr. Beecher fixes his attention upon some incident or sermon, or prayer, or speech, which best represents the genius or the heart of the man. We make our idols, and join ourselves to them with affectionate tenacity. Had I an artist at command I could order pictures that gold could never buy. I would say to the artist:

"Paint Mr. Beecher coming into the ante-room of the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, in 1863, solemn, dignified, like a prophet conscious of his 'burden'—eloquent in pathetic silence.

"Paint him as I have seen him at Peekskill—Boscobel the blest—seated at the family altar on Sunday morning, reading, singing, praying, then giving a father's kiss to every guest—man, woman, and child.

"Paint him when driving, Jehu-like, a span of thunder and lightning, with a fury that would have been fruitful of accidents but that the horses knew him, and loved his generous mastery.

"Paint him in conversation, with all the April variety of his face, constant only in its truthfulness. Catch, above all things, the smile—the smile which began so far away, so dawn-like, and broadened into a summer morning. O painter, let me charge thee to seize that spirit-smile.

"Paint him, if thou canst paint comedy, in many a rollicking mood, every look a farce, every tone an irony, every attitude a caricature, laughing till the crimson tide flushed his shapely head with ominous fulness, yet in all the hilarity not one word of bitterness, not one sting of spite.

" But, failing all these, I would have thee gather thy strength for one supreme effort—nay, a miracle. Invoke all the ancestors of art, and bid them help thee. Paint the church in which he worked ; let it be more a shadow than a geometric form. The Sunday Benediction has been pronounced ; the sun has long retired ; the white-haired pastor lingers that he may have an extra benediction through the medium of music ; his eyes are full of tears. Two little children unconsciously approach him, and stand quite near ; he turns, he sees them, he lays a hand on each young head, then he kisses the wayfarers, and with his hands upon them or around them, the three walk away together, one of them never to return."

Never to return ! Say of such : "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat ; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." " The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Our sainted dead are alive for evermore. Death is swallowed up in victory—the grave is conquered—and Heaven comes to our thought with friendlier familiarity. This is more than sentiment—it is inspiration. It is strength that can carry the load of life; it is enthusiasm that makes sorrow itself a Sacrament. The sainted dead come to us in many a holy vision—

> "Not to dwarf us by their stature,
> But to show
> To what bigness we may grow."

"I heard a voice from Heaven, saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." We know that such a voice can be from Heaven only, for such music slumbers not in the harps of earth. We need Resurrection to complete Birth. The Resurrection is an instinct as well as a doctrine. Birth without Resurrection is most palpable cruelty. Then should we say: this God began to build, and was not able to finish. We need not argue Immortality; it is enough to feel it. Death itself is the best teacher of Immortality. It makes Immortality possible; it makes Immortality necessary. When death comes upon a man like Henry Ward Beecher, we cannot believe that it has ended the shining of such genius, the ministry of such love, the hopefulness of such aspiration. To-day he is nearer to us than ever he was before.

> "He has outsoared the shadow of our night:
> Envy, and calumny, and hate and pain,
> And that unrest which men miscall delight
> Can touch him not, and torture not again."

Yet he is here, a watcher, not a critic; here to bless, not to rebuke; here to use all the old words of love with larger meanings; here to give assurance that Death is but the door-keeper of Heaven. I will not say that Henry Ward Beecher is absent. Do I not see him? Do I not know those lamp-like eyes, shining with joy above all words? Can I be mistaken as to that voice whose subdued thunder has so often enchained and repaid my attention? Can there be any doubt as to that calm and steadfast look? I will speak to him. No impatient question as to Heaven will I ask. I will say: Loved One, Husband, Father, Pastor, Friend, HENRY, we will soon—quite soon, almost immediately—join thee, and so shall be

FOR EVER WITH THE LORD.

NOTE XIX.

In bringing together my reminiscences as a writer of books, I drop the potential mood, and keep faithfully within the narrow limits of the indicative. As the author of more than forty volumes, I ought to have made some practical notes regarding the whole craft of authorship and publication. Like most boys, I used to write sketches and lampoons in as many local papers as would condescend to accept them. My first really serious attempt at book-making occurred in my twenty-third year. I was then an assistant minister in London, and lodging very comfortably in rooms which cost me ten shillings and sixpence a week. Having a little time on my hands, I wrote a few sketches, entitled "Chapters for Young Thinkers." To the best of my recollection, they were crowded with instances of industry and perseverance on the part of boys—mainly Greek and Roman—who had risen to social position and influence. What to do with the little manuscript when it was finished puzzled me. Of course, the publishers of London are all hungering and thirsting for new ideas and workable suggestions, and possibly, if they had known of my manuscript, they might have made some encroachment upon my obscurity. Failing the approach from them, I took the initiative into my own hands.

With my manuscript carefully secured in my most out-of-the-way pocket, I went down to Ludgate Hill, and when I came to the entrance of La Belle Sauvage Yard, I gave a boy twopence to take my parcel to the office of Cassell and Co. Having seen the boy enter the office door, I took to my heels and ran up Fleet Street with almost suspicious rapidity. Would the great publisher apply for a warrant for my arrest? Would he in some way or other avenge my attack upon his dignity? A few days passed, and, to my great surprise and delight, I received a letter from Mr. Cassell, accepting my "Chapters," and enclosing a cheque for six guineas. To my imagination the whole future blazed with light. It was now overwhelmingly clear to me that my fortune lay in my quill. Thus we deceive ourselves, and thus we are led on from point to point in our practical education by the most pleasing and seductive illusions.

Settled in my first pastorate, I laid in a stock of quills and stationery. My eye caught an advertisement, offering two prizes for the two best essays on a given religious subject. I went in for the first prize, and got the second; but this was not discouraging, as more than one hundred and fifty essays had been sent in, and the first prize had been awarded to a very distinguished Edinburgh minister. When I got the seventy-five pounds safely into my hands, no banker in Europe felt more secure against the ravages of anxiety. The next effort I made was a small book, entitled, "Helps to Truth-seekers." That little book had a history of its own which I cannot willingly let die. Mr. G. J. Holyoake, the redoubtable exponent of Secularism, had come into my town to deliver lectures upon his favourite philosophy of life. I was moved to enter into a three nights' debate with this really able debater. We had the three nights together, face to face with a large audience, and from beginning to end not one personality was imported into the discussion. I was charmed with Mr. Holyoake, and I believe that he, in his turn, did not form a hostile opinion of myself. My part of the debate appeared in a little pamphlet entitled "Six Chapters on Secularism," which afterwards was developed into "Helps to Truth-seekers." Books for guidance to young inquirers are in nearly all cases successful, showing that this kind of elementary literature is really needed by troubled minds. This little book, which I would not for the world republish to-day, is bringing to me even now recognitions and appreciations which are most encouraging.

The principal book which next issued from my pen was published anonymously. I used to hear it discussed and estimated by my brethren and others, who had no suspicion that the author was listening to them. This book had an immediate sale in quite considerable numbers. Its title was "Ecce Deus." No doubt owing to the immense popularity of "Ecce Homo," my anonymous book had a special opportunity created for it. I had reason to be glad that "Ecce Deus" was published anonymously, for it got a chance of being estimated on its merits. This was also the case with my next anonymous book, entitled " Springdale Abbey: Extracts from the Diaries and Letters of an English Preacher."

Nobody could guess who the author was. I had the pleasure of observing that it was attributed to three or four distinguished authors. Little by little the authorship was traced, and one of the most distinguished provincial booksellers assured me that the moment it was fathered on a Dissenter the circulation went down. I am unwilling to believe that this would be the case now, since every decade enlarges and enlightens the judgment even of ecclesiastical opponents. " Springdale Abbey " has long been out of print. I made a still further attempt to secure attention by anonymity in the case of a laboured theological work entitled " The Paraclete." This is out of sight the best work I have ever done in the matter of literary composition. A good deal of the book I wrote four times over with my own hand. The work was issued at twelve shillings, and 1,200 copies were sold. In this case my anonymity brought me good rewards. In one case especially, a bitter opponent of mine reviewed the book without the slightest idea of its authorship, and commended it in the strongest terms. To his honour be it said that, when he did get to know who wrote the book, he came to me and thanked me for it in the most appreciative terms. If that man had seen my name on the title-page he never would have looked at the exposition, so powerfully may prejudice affect even Christian minds. I lay the more stress upon the fact that large portions of "The Paraclete" were written four times over to call attention to the circumstance that my next little book, written in three hours, went up to a circulation of 90,000 copies in a very short time, and had the honour of being translated into various languages, and reprinted in several countries. How are we to account for these things? If real hard work went for anything, "The Paraclete" should have taken the lead in circulation; whereas "Job's Comforters" was written *currente calamo*, and in a small way took the religious world by storm. "Thou canst not tell which shall prosper." In this way, as in others, "the wind bloweth where it listeth." "Job's Comforters" was published at a time when men supposed that science was going to do everything. My question was, What will science do for a man like the Job of the Bible? I transferred the ancient circumstance to a modern instance, and then I set science to work upon it. My Job was impoverished, afflicted, and made desolate. "Then came unto him Huxley, the Moleculite; John Stuart, the Millite; and Tyndall, the Sadducee; and they endeavoured to comfort Job out of their scientific books." Professor Tyndall himself wrote to me about the satire, and in a very kindly and appreciative tone. Mr. Gladstone ordered five-and-twenty copies; the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote me a special letter of thanks; and I was called upon in many directions to read the satire as a lecture. How discouraging it is, in some aspects, to work severely upon a subject, and to sell only 1,200 copies of your book; then to write in an off-handed manner, and the circulation to go up to 90,000! Is circulation a real test of merit? The man who has had no circulation will determine that question almost angrily in the negative.

The "People's Bible" I have published in twenty-five octavo volumes. Happily, that work got into the hands of men who could commercially treat it in an adequate manner. To myself they acted most handsomely, so that it is now difficult for me to believe that Barabbas was really a publisher. Speaking of publishers, I can only say of them what is true of every other class of the community, namely, that there are good publishers and bad ones. It is folly to condemn all publishers, and it would be wicked to praise others. Some authors are of opinion that a publisher is really not necessary, because author and bookseller could come face to face without the offices of a middle man. A good deal is to be said on both sides. For my own part, having tried both methods, I believe that an energetic and honourable publisher is the author's best friend. I have always gone upon the principle that the more the publisher made out of my books the better I was satisfied, provided that he paid me the sum for which we originally agreed.

The man who comforts me most on all literary matters is Sir Walter Besant. He has a dictum which he is never tired of repeating, and which I am never tired of hearing—the simple dictum that literature is property. On the whole, I believe he is right. The only difficulty that some men have is that publishers will not adopt the same opinion in all cases. An artist, not unknown, has painted at least half a hundred pictures, and never sold one. He has them all hanging up in his house, and a catalogue, marked in plain figures, quietly slumbers in his desk. According to that catalogue, the artist is worth ten thousand pounds; but, unhappily, the money is in the catalogue, not in the bank. Sir Walter Besant would not have authors destroy any composition, because one day it may acquire a literary value. I think most of us have proved this to be true. My advice to young authors is to peg away with might and main, being more intent upon doing good work than upon making an immediate income. "In all labour there is profit." They should make up their minds to many disappointments. Oh, that horrible postman! who has not seen him bringing the well-known parcel back? Who has not peeped out of the front-window and squirmed in secret because of a bitter and humiliating disappointment? Never mind; this lot is common to us all. Of course, the only thing which is proved by the incident is that the publisher either lacks discrimination or a sense of fair play as between man and man. I know of no disappointment that does not bring with it some subtle, if not always substantial consolation.

It is, of course, the same with the reviewers as with the publishers. When they praise us, we know by that sign how richly they are endowed with genius and power; when they abuse us, we see in a moment that they are malignant and detestable creatures who ought to be swept off the face of the earth.

NOTE XX.

ANONYMOUS fiction is no paradox in words, and is often an extreme convenience in practice. When Sir Walter Scott sat behind a newspaper and heard wild speculations as to the authorship of "Waverley," he felt that mystery brings a greatness of its own, and runs up the market value of work that is felt to be good. For the time being "Waverley" was a bigger name than Scott, yet in the end Scott made "Waverley" a kind of foot-stool. Mary Ann Evans would be about the poorest conceivable name to print upon a title-page, because its obscurity carries with it a bottomless depth of impotence. Even now that the world knows all about it, "'Adam Bede,' by Mary Ann Evans," would severely try the fancy of any one on the search for an interesting book. It is the same with John Wilson. What simpler name can be imagined or invented? There is nothing in it of mountain or flood or heather. Yet Dickens said he was "A tremendous fellow to talk to," and Edinburgh turned round to look after him, and Harriet Martineau said he was her ideal of the first Adam. When he called himself Christopher North he seemed to feel that the world wanted something more than John Wilson—something that went more direct to the fancy and the hope of life by carrying with it at least a promise of vigour and fresh air. John Wilson might have been a brazier in a back street; Christopher North must at least be a brawny Scot, with a tuft of heather in his braid bonnet. On the other hand, Dickens turned commonplace into a very marked specialty, and showed genius even in the retention of his lowly name. Dickens was the very name for the books he wrote. Full of daily life, full of oddities, whims, burlesque, and impossibility, they wanted just such a name.

Love of pseudonymity—surely it could be nothing else—can alone account for the action of some authors. Charlotte Brontë, for example—why call herself Currer Bell? To the great world the one title was as anonymous as the other, whilst in Brontë there is more piquancy and more flash than there can ever be in Bell, notwithstanding its general respectability. There is actually in process of issue a series of books called the Pseudonym Library. The idea is whimsical, to such an extent as to be almost absurd. Who is Lance Falconer, Magdalen Brook, Von Degen, John Oliver Hobbes? Are they men, women, or children? One of the books is by Isabel Snow, but she may be a man six feet high, with features artificially crimson. John Oliver Hobbes may be a blonde with a poet's eyes and a voice full of melody. The point of interest is that all these people think some other name better than their own for literary uses and market ends. How would this policy act in the Royal Academy? Suppose Sir Frederick Leighton paints under the name of Hobbes, and Alma Tadema as Susan Soot? Yet why not? This very thing is done on the stage, dramatic and musical, and is supposed to be an advance on grand-motherly habits. Why not call Pickles Picklesi, and cover him with glory by a single vowel? Why live in the obscurity of Muff, when by adding an "o" you can shine in the lustre of unimaginable Italian antiquity?

This pseudonymity has made good its footing even in commerce. At first it looks like a poet's trick, or the craze of a false modesty, but it is found in hard, prosaic, profit-making trade. A firm of three names may consist of one man whose name is not one of them. The common appendix "and Co." may mean nothing in the way of responsibility; it may be a mere decoration, without a penny in the business. Who can quietly contemplate the possibility of this habit establishing itself in the Senate or in the Church? Then Henry Dominisco may be member for Midlothian, and Augustus Claviani may be the Leader of the House. As for the Church, she might write her illustrious names on scrolls of silk in letters of gold, and even her inferior clergy might find in sonorous appellations the comfort that is incompatible with their incomes. An infinite advantage might thus be gained by members of the House of Commons. They could change their identity with their politics; they could become opportunists in designation; they could resent the charge of inconsistency as a butterfly might resent the insinuation that it was once a catapillar. Whatever may be the ups and downs of no-names and false names, it will be generally agreed that so long as the freak plays itself out without touching integrity of purpose it may fairly take its place amongst the minor amusements of the world.

NOTE XXI.

Why did Nature deny me a verbal memory? It is almost wholly impossible for me to commit anything to memory. With great pains I have written a long lecture on "Hamlet," but I will not deliver it, because I cannot recite the soliloquies, and I am too foolishly proud to read them. I get into private places and try what I can do with the poet, and this is how he comes out:

"Arms and the man I sing" (no, that's Virgil!). "O that this too, too solid flesh would melt, like Iser rolling rapidly" (no, that's wrong!). "Hyperion to a satyr with a bare bodkin" (no; tush! it works like madness in the brain!). "Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears had left the flushing of the galled eyes, she through an Alpine village bore mid snow and ice" (no, that will never do; this is maddening!). "To be or not to be, neither a borrower nor a lender be" (this is more maddening than ever!).

This will appear to literal people to be an exaggeration, but it is simply a miserable fact. It is the same with quotations from the Bible, but, happily, I am too cautious to rush into such quotations, so I read them, and escape the confusion of the young orator who perspiringly and convincingly exclaimed:

"And they took up of the fragments that remained fourteen baskets full. Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?" Other men have phenomenal memories. They can plagiarise without knowing it, the peculiarity being as already noted—that they can remember every page but the title-page. Their memory accounts for their salary. I am not afraid to charge a plagiarist to his face:

> "It warms the very sickness in my heart,
> That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
> *Thus diddest thou.*"

But names change. We used to call a man a thief; now we call him a plagiarist or a kleptomaniac. Once we spoke of drunkenness; now we speak of dipsomania. Once we said a man was over head and ears in debt; now we say he is in arrears. Is all this tampering with words an improvement? Is the face better for wearing a mask? Brother, when thou stealest a great man's sermon, be not as the hypocrites are.

Some ingenious persons have found a way out of the difficulty by dividing preachers into two classes: (1) Original thinkers; and (2) distributors of other men's thoughts. I have no objection, provided men in the second class distinctly announce themselves to be distributors, and especially if they honestly tell whose thoughts they are distributing. I think it a pity that any preacher should strain his mind when he can avail himself of Chalmers, Robertson, Beecher, and many others, and honestly tell the people to whose sermons they are listening. I have advised young men to give such sermons, say, once a month, if they wish to edify and gratify their people.

My long experience goes to the fact that in the long-run honest men become respected and trusted, and adventurers work out their little course of deception. The honest man has nothing to fear. At first he may be misunderstood ; at last he will be recognised. It was the same with John the Baptist. People said at first : " He is a reed shaken by the wind, or a flash in the pan, or a nine days' wonder." Then they said : " He is a man clothed in fine raiment, he is feathering his nest, he has an eye on the main chance." When these two slanders were worn out, the same people said : " There must be something in him ; he wears well. He is a prophet ! " Never mind what they say. Keep steadily to honest work. Scamp nothing. Never steal a thought. Know that the Eye, all-seeing, is on thee, young soul, and trust nothing but truth, and be beholden to God only for pity.

NOTE XXII.

THE effect of numbers upon some minds is most remarkable. When only one duke attended the City Temple he used to be watched for with trembling expectation. The common people were nothing heeded; it was the duke that everybody was expecting, and, indeed, longing for. What the duke had on, how he looked from behind as he sat in his pew, how he coughed, how he took certain parts of the sermon, what he seemed to give to the collection—these were the questions which excited universal interest, immensely to the disadvantage of the sermon. But when two more dukes came, and then two more, and more still, until the number got up to fourteen dukes, with duchesses and dukettes, fifty-six in all, they were treated with something like indifference, and, indeed, one red-handed Radical treated the whole of them with contempt, and the very doorkeepers hustled them into their places as if they were only common mud, like the minister himself.

The question has often occurred to me whether a duke can ever really understand Jesus of Nazareth. I don't see how he can. Does not a duke travel to whatever heaven he has in view, just as he would travel from London to Edinburgh—that is, by a kind of authorised time-table? Who would think of travelling by a railway of his own making? Who would pray on his own responsibility? What duke would think of approaching the Eternal without a carefully written address authorised to be read in churches? A duke is nothing if not orderly. The law is written for him; why not the prayer? We don't make our own hymns; why should we make our own prayers and thanksgivings? The duke would seem to have reason on his side, and analogy, and good history; besides, it would be impious to think of a duke being enthusiastic about anything. It would ruffle him. It would be unlike all the rest of his sedate and uncrumpled life. Who could imagine a duke taking part in the "Hallelujah Chorus?" The one thing most duke-hated is sensationalism. When the psalmist called on people to shout, to praise God with a loud noise, and to laud Him with cymbals, and high-sounding cymbals, he was, of course, referring to the riff-raff in the gallery. No judicious commentator will deny that.

The great object of a duke in going to church is to get it over. A sermon longer than ten minutes is, or should be, an indictable offence, and truly the duke is not far wrong under certain circumstances. Felix cut the Apostle short. No Felix can hold out more than a certain time. Why should he? Felix has his recreations at home.

Far be it from me to judge dukes. There are bad and good in all classes. I believe it is possible for a lamp-lighter to be no better than he should be. Perhaps a millionaire may pray, but what has he to pray for?

A man is not necessarily a saint because he works in the dockyards, nor is a man necessarily going to the devil because he has a bank in Lombard Street. No doubt money does work wonders in a man's constitution. I have known a mechanic rise from point to point in money-making until he could not attend evening service for fear of getting cold. His balance at the bank made him sensitive to the evening air. When he had twenty shillings a week no draught could get at him. It was different when he had twenty pounds a week. Of course it was. We must not condemn the man; it might have been the same with any of us.

We don't know what dukes have to put up with. We should be considerate one of another. The greatest will be gentlest.

Her Majesty was good enough to send for me to Windsor last week, just to talk matters over without committing either of us to anything. The conversation was "without prejudice" and quite frank.

"Now," said her Majesty, "how would you shape things if you had your own way?"

I was shattered and broken up into little pieces.

"I suppose," her Majesty continued, "you have a little card up your sleeve?"

I stammered "Yes," and coloured into quite a notable complexion.

"First of all, your Majesty," I said, "I would always have the Prime Minister in the House of Commons. When either Salisbury or Rosebery is premier, he should sit, and speak, and vote as a commoner."

"Well?"

"I would limit the House of Commons to one hundred members, say two a county, and twenty or so for Universities, financial corporations and industrial boards."

"Well?"

"If I retained the bishops, I would put them in the House of Commons. If the Church is national, the bishops should be in the national house—fathers of the people, not lords of the realm."

"Well?"

"I would have county parliaments, not to legislate, but to formulate opinion upon public questions, and to advise the House of Commons. They would be educative, disciplinary, and patriotic."

"Well?"

"I would try these suggestions before going further, but if I might add another point, quite incidentally, it would be that I would hang any man who spoke more than half an hour at once, except in introducing the Budget or some bill bearing upon high policy, and I would award a royal honour to any man who held his tongue for two sessions."

Her Majesty did not seem to be at all overborne by my presence. She maintained her composure wonderfully, and, indeed, she said she was glad to have met a Dissenter, and to find that he was a fairly well-dressed human being.

"Might have been—
  I dunno'.
Jest so; might ha' been.
  Then, agin——"

NOTE XXIII.

I HAVE referred to John Oliver Hobbes. I expected from the name only to see a man six feet high, strongly coloured, and gleamingly bald. I was sure his staff would be like a weaver's beam, and his voice a grunt with hardly an educated tone in its puffy blurr. I never liked the name of Hobbes. It had always a taint of infidelity, and an evil look of dark and unexplained designs. But one gets used to things—some people, oddly put together, get used even to tobacco and to evening newspapers. So I have got used to Hobbes, and do not now mind him much in the way of offence. I do not know how John Oliver likes Hobbes, but I feel as if he did not value the painful association. It looks as if he had fallen in the world, or had to carry a parcel that looked uncanny. Between Oliver and Hobbes there is the very same difference that there is between going up a ladder and coming down.

But, to my infinite amazement, my John Oliver Hobbes turned out to be a woman. That was mystery on mystery. She was no John at all, and no Oliver, and no Hobbes! What a lying world it is, when we are out of it—quite a misleading and mocking world, all paint and sawdust and orange-peel, and taxes! I don't know that I am exactly right in calling John Oliver Hobbes a woman, for she is only a girl—to me a girl, for I knew her when she could hardly walk, yet even then her eyes, being rightly interpreted, were quietly and brightly looking round for epigrams, and for faces that could be cut on cherry-stones. Pearl Richards was a child of character; wise up to the height of silence; too innocent to be really guiltless, for no sooner was a man's back turned than she took off his oddities with infinite accuracy, especially if that man happened to be a woman. She caught a giggle when people thought she was looking a mile away, and repeated a tone with the faithfulness of an echo. Yet who could look more guileless? She could turn you into an epigram in the act of asking you to have another knob of sugar in your tea, and in your answer she would see your character and forecast your doom. She has a dreadful power of epigram. She can fit you into six words, and do it so neatly that you cannot get out again. As for personification, she is simply a creator, and she does it so fast as to make the first chapter of Genesis quite slow. This genial author works by capital letters, and fills galleries with the new-made vitalities. She writes reality with a capital "R," and you have no idea how that affects the simple little word; and prudence with a capital "P," and utility with a capital "U," and, presto! these words, or others like them, become personalities and forces. Without being an absolutely novel way (for Carlyle knew it well), it has quite a strong effect as used by this pictorial writer.

How did she begin the world of letters? I can tell you. She has always been a devotee of the family ink-horn, and early she went in even for printers' ink. Probably I was the first editor who received and printed the writings of Pearl Richards. Do you wonder, then, that I feel upon my face a sheen of reflected glory? Can you wonder that I prefer Pearl Richards as a name to John Oliver Hobbes, especially as some persons persist in calling it 'Obbes? I claim your vote in favour of my preference. But let us be methodical in our history, and join the budding Hobbes at the tender age of seven. At that age she was walking from the City Temple with her aunt, and they came upon a dead cat upon the sidewalk.

Aunt: "There, I wish all the cats in London were lying just as dead as that one."

Seven-year-old Niece: "That's not a very kind speech, Aunt Anna. Some day you'll be lying dead, and people will be saying, 'I wish every one like her was just lying as dead as she is.' Now, if a dog or a cat were to come along they would feel sorry; but that just shows that there's compensation in all things."

There you have reproof, forecast, sympathy, and philosophy in one imperious sentence.

Now we advance a step, and see John Oliver

Hobbes in her first published essay. Here is the article just as I printed it:

"LOST, A DOG.

"I WONDER if any little boys and girls that read the *Fountain* ever lost a dog. I have; and if you like I will tell you my experience on that subject. First of all, Sandy (the dog) is a very valuable pug. He has all the points, which consist of purple eyes, black ears, four moles, curly tail, and cream-coloured fur. Now, Sandy, like all other dogs (and children, too), was very fond of having some one to play with, and having no companions, felt very lonely: so on mornings when Kate (our housemaid) left the drawing-room windows open, he would seize his opportunity and jump out of the window, run down the path, and out of the gate into the street, but would always come back to breakfast. Now, one particular morning he did not come back, but we all supposed he had found a particularly interesting dog and was hunting cats, and, like King Herod's soldiers, seizing their very unfortunate kittens (only Herod's wicked soldiers killed little children). When I came home from school I missed Sandy's usual bark of welcome, and instantly raised an alarm—first to the crossing-sweeper, then to the policeman (our own 'Bobby'), the tradespeoples' lads, and, lastly, to the police-station, but no one had seen or heard of Sandy. After two days of worrying we printed 'Dog Lost' in the *Times*. This seemed of no use—when just as we were going to give up, an extremely doggy-looking man presented himself at the gate. Mamma, who was sitting at the window, said instantly, 'That man has come about the dog!' She could see pugs, black and skye terriers, pointers, and bulldogs in every motion of his body as he came up the walk. We all went to the door, and the *man* said, 'As 'e know'd a party as 'ad got the dorg h'off another party 'ou 'ad pay'd fifty bobs for 'im, and hif we paid 'im back the fifty bobs 'e would let us 'ave 'im.' Mamma said, 'Certainly; bring me the dog and you shall have the fifty shillings;' but he said, 'I can't do that, mum; some one must go with me and see the party, and hidentify the dorg.' Of course none of the servants would go with 'sich a vagabont,' and we didn't blame them. So mamma sent him to papa's office, and he told him the same tale. Papa told him to bring the dog, and get his money—but no, some one must go with him, which papa finally consented to do, and drove down to the Holborn Viaduct, as the man had said, where he should meet 'the party.' There, imagine papa's surprise when reaching the Viaduct, to be told that he must go to Bunhill Row, in Finsbury. So off they went, till the dog-man stopped at a public-house, called ——, and asked papa to go inside and have a drop, while 'e went to fetch '*the party*,' who would be back in five minutes. Papa said he would wait outside, and he truly did wait for one hour and a half, but no man, 'party,' or dog appeared. Then papa thought it was getting 'played out' —hailed the first cab and came home—disgusted. The only reason we could make out why the man didn't return was, he thought he was being followed, and would be put in charge as soon as he returned with the dog, which fancy was partly true, for a friend of ours did follow, but only for the purpose of assistance in case papa got into trouble with the man, for he looked such a rogue. Well, there was another week of waiting, and yet no news of Sandy. Another advertisement was put in, in answer to which another dog-man came and said he would really give us the dog if we promised not to put him in charge, and would pay the fifty shillings. So mamma started him off to the office; again the story was told to papa, who called a four-wheeler, told the dog-man to mount the box with cabby, and with a young man from the office inside with our servant Lizzie, told the cabby to drive wherever the man said and not lose sight of him, and to pay the money if the dog was produced. The journey was successful, for an hour afterwards the cab drove up with—yes—could it be!—Sandy? He nearly knocked us all down he was so glad to get home, and after he had barked a little out of the windows, mamma took him down stairs by the back of his neck and plunged him into a tub of warm water and soap, and gave him a good scrubbing. When the old gardener saw him, he said, ‘Mem, I can see ’ees a skeleton, ’e be so thin,’ an now as he lies so still I can see no fat on him at all, and he looks only a remnant of his former sleek, fat, and glorious lordship, Sandy. I think missing his nice home for two weeks taught him a sad, but good lesson, and I don’t believe he will ever go off alone again from the old gate of Sandy Hook.

“PEARL RICHARDS, 10 years.”

There we leave the child. The growing woman still lived near the ink-horn, and sent sketches, criticisms, and various articles to the Society papers. Then came “Some Emotions and a Moral,” her first book. She came, she saw, she conquered, just as Cæsar did, but with other weapons. Then came “A Study in Temptations,” and then “A Bundle of Life,” and more and more have come, and are coming. For John Oliver Hobbes must work. She likes it, welcomes it, takes her holiday and her recreation in doing it. If the work has any fault, it is that it is faultless. It allows nothing for human weakness. There is no scamping when John “puts out to sea.” I call her rather cruel and pitiless herein, for she pricks the reader forward when forty winks might do him good. Nothing is cut to waste. I am not sorry that I hit upon that word “cut,” for it gives me the right idea of the whole scheme of her work. It is not painting; it is sculpture. Now I think of it, that is exactly what it is. Everything is clear-cut, sharp, pointed, and cleanly tooled. Her books are galleries of sculpture, men's heads and women's heads in dozens, not one grinning, but most of them with a laugh on the lips if you have eyes to see it. In John Oliver Hobbes' books there are no tufts of grass, no festoons of roses, no purling gurgling brooks. I believe that in one of them somebody does walk across a lawn, but that is the only bit of green grass that I can clearly remember. All the characters are tersely eloquent; even the least sparkling are the occasion of sparkle in others. They all seem to talk with their teeth, and then to carry on a lively game of biting. A man no sooner opens his mouth than some woman (always a woman) nips his head off. The epigram guillotine flashes down, and the head is in the basket. It is all over before you think it has begun. Then, is there no fun in the books? Oh yes. But it is of its own sort. You know how you laughed when the old woman fell out of the omnibus, and all her sandwiches and a small flask rolled in the mud? Now, other people could have seen in the event something to be sorry for; but you laughed, and you laughed again when you got home and mentioned the matter at your own fireside. John Oliver Hobbes makes no attempt at poetry. Opal dawns and starry eves are not to be found; rainbows and haze full of cherubs are not on the premises. Here the pale moon never kisses the green wave, and, in fact, there might be no moon at all for any use Hobbes makes of it, although there is a Cynthia in "Some Emotions and a Moral."

In "A Study in Temptations" the brilliant novelist wrote this in her own microscopic caligraphy:

> "To my first reviewer, Dr. Joseph Parker, the first also to encourage my childish attempts at literary composition, the first to prize work which was only remarkable for its gigantic intention.
>
> "J. O. H."

There!

NOTE XXIV.

THERE is a growing conviction in some important quarters that the Christian pulpit is allowing itself to be enfeebled by the contemptuous criticism of a few modern writers. These writers, be it remembered, never come near the pulpit, and never accord it any recognition but a sneer, yet their malign influence is clearly traceable in not a little of the Christian ministration of the day. Preachers who were wont, in the intensity, and even passion, of their early faith, to be most clear and positive in their doctrinal utterances, are now apt to hesitate in some parts of their speech, lest the ghost of an absent enemy should be offended. The consequence is that such preachers are strongly tempted to address an imaginary audience, to the spiritual neglect of honest men who expect to hear from them the living and redeeming Word of God. A young preacher especially easily leads himself to suppose that he must preach to "the day," but, unfortunately for his theory, "the day" never comes to hear him, and his controversial gifts are, though unintentionally, most ingeniously and successfully employed in vexing and disappointing anxious and devout listeners. That some people may be pleased with the kind of preaching which is eloquently addressed to "the day" is far from improbable, seeing that it never stings the conscience, and never condescends to enter the region of moral discipline. It is simply a sublime fight in the air, in the exciting progress of which the combatants fiercely strike at nothing, and hit it with magnificent precision.

There is neither irony nor sarcasm in the statement that in listening to some preachers, deservedly conspicuous and influential, one receives the impression that there is an eager though invisible auditory before them, whose one object is to give them the lie at the end of every sentence, and to convict them of lunacy in the construction of every argument. The fact is, that in such cases the preacher is rather replying to the books which he has been reading during the week than giving himself to the actual experience which is represented by his congregation. Instead of this, we plead to have the Gospel preached with intelligence and pathos, as the answer of God to the want of the world, assured that such preaching will be followed, as it will undoubtedly be inspired, by the gracious energy of the Holy Ghost. We are far from denying that notice should be paid to current criticism upon Christian doctrine, but quite as far from assenting that such notice should be paid from the pulpit. Written attacks are best met by written defences, and even were it not so from a literary point of view, it is certainly more honourable to meet an enemy on his own ground than to fire upon him from the security of a privileged position.

That the Gospel is a message to humanity rather than to any special set of men, will be unanimously agreed; then, *a fortiori*, it should be addressed to a universal want rather than to individual scepticisms or sectional eccentricities. The Christian sanctuary is not a high school for the education of a few pupils, but a free school for the instruction of the whole world. The rich and poor meet together, the master and servant, the strong and the weak, the old man and the little child, all assemble there, and upon them all a rich rain of a common blessing should descend. Loss of sympathy is loss of power. If as preachers we become separated from the common mass by betaking ourselves to some specialty of our vocation, as, for example, the refutation of sceptics who never listen to us, and the destruction of theories of whose very existence nine-tenths of our hearers are totally unaware, we shall cut ourselves off from those currents of sympathy upon whose right use so much of ministerial usefulness depends. Preachers who in the proper use of the term are truly successful preach to *man* rather than to *men*, so much so that, though here and there a sense of dissatisfaction may inflict individual minds, there is, on the whole, a happy consciousness that Divine truth has been offered for the salvation and nourishment of the soul. In morals as well as in physics, men soon find out the difference between a candle and the sun. The pedantic debater is but a street-lamp, useful enough in his place; but the genuine Christian preacher, whose sympathies are as broad as his theology, is as the sun shedding a brilliant and impartial glory upon human life.

One of the prime conditions of a spiritually influential ministry is a methodical presentation of Christian history and dogma. Want of method is want of force. Every preacher is bound to tell his hearers in an orderly and complete manner what it is that he really wishes them to believe. For the stimulus of his best powers let him suppose himself to be addressed by his hearers in some such words as these: "We have gathered around you as men who desire above all things to know the truth; we meet you with an honest disposition and purpose. Tell us, then, patiently and sympathetically what it is that you wish us to receive as the truth of God." The preacher who accepts this noble challenge will do a work of infinite consequence, whose results will abide when pulpit-trifling has gone to its deserved oblivion.

It is a mistake to suppose that ordinary congregations cannot hold their attention to a consecutive exposition of Christian faith. The preacher may, indeed, have the unhappy art of mystification, in which case his incapacity must not be excused at the expense of his hearers; but where there is even average ability to interest a congregation, that ability will find itself exercised to the highest advantage in following an orderly and ever-expanding course. The wise teacher will instinctively guard against such scholastic technicalities and refinements as will embarrass not only undisciplined, but over-burdened and over-driven men; he will point out the sunny fields of Christian instruction and consolation with the cordial delight of a shepherd rather than with the critical rigour of a botanist, and so will conceal his genius by the beautiful covering of his grace. We preach most definitely and profitably to "the day" by preaching the truths which belong to unlimited time; any other course will elevate accidents into principles, and invest with exaggerated importance the abortive assaults which are made upon the Christian kingdom. The pulpit turned into a medium for the advertisement of heretical books is about as flagrant a violation of public stewardship as can possibly disgrace any messenger who bears the name of the Son of God.

NOTE XXV.

(*Written long before Mr. Irving was knighted.*)

THE innumerable reviews of Mr. Irving by literary and artistic experts have left room enough for an amateur estimate by a man who is accustomed to regard human life mainly from a religious standpoint. A complete review of the stage by the pulpit could hardly be the work of a single pen; for my own part, therefore, I can only make a very small contribution to such a review by indicating a few points which have occurred to me in the study of one particular actor. At once, however, the question arises: Is Mr. Irving a man who can be thus summarily characterised? In a dramatic sense, are there not many Mr. Irvings? When a man can act "The Two Roses" and "The Dead Heart" with equal effect; when he can at will be as vulgar as Robert Macaire or as dignified as Cardinal Wolsey; when he can be either as young as Hamlet or as old as Lear, the inquiry as to his plurality becomes natural and pertinent. For my part, I rank Mr. Irving the comedian above Mr. Irving the tragedian, just as I rank Nature above Art. Each may be highest in its own way, yet the one may have a charm which the other cannot boast. Mr. Irving's tragedy sometimes requires working-up, but his comedy is spontaneous and immediate.

The needful working-up of tragedy is no fault of the actor. Tragedy should hardly ever begin at once; the murder may come too soon. Premature rage is followed by untimely laughter. Digby Grant begins at once, and can be his best self in the very first sentence; but Macbeth must move towards his passion by finely-graded ascents. In Mr. Irving's exquisite representation, Macbeth's anxieties and perturbations, his rapid alternations of courage and cowardice, make delicate but obvious record of themselves in deepening the grey of his hair and ploughing more deeply the lines of his face. A comedy may be judged scene by scene, almost sentence by sentence; but a tragedy can be truly estimated only when viewed in final perspective.

Judged by this test, I have no hesitation in regarding Mr. Irving's King Lear as the finest creation of his genius. This is an instance in which the actor creates the piece. Shakespeare is, as a poet and playwright, at his worst in "King Lear"; yet his accessories are wonderful in variety and suggestiveness. Only Shakespeare could have created the heath, and have so ordered the old King's passion as to make his madness part of the very thunder and lightning. That was Shakespeare's magnificent conception, and Mr. Irving's rendering is worthy of its tempestuous grandeur. How to talk up to the storm; how to pierce the tumult with the cries of human distress; how to escape the ridiculous and the incongruous; how to be a king on the desolate heath, and to make the royalty gleam through the angry darkness, were the problems, and Mr. Irving solved them one and all, even with redundance of faculty and skill. At the end of the Heath scene the man is more remembered than the storm. It has been objected that in the first scene Mr. Irving's Lear is too old and feeble. I further venture to think that the King's age and the King's imbecility have both been accurately appreciated. A man at eighty, a man athirst for flattery, a man who would pay a kingdom in exchange for adulation, must have outlived all that is best and strongest in human nature. He comes upon the stage as a wreck. His vanity has eaten up his sagacity, so that she, Goneril or Regan, who can flatter most, can lie most, and can play the devil best, shall fare most lavishly at his hands. Is it not well partly to excuse these excesses of self-valuation by such mitigations as can be found in the infirmity of old age? Even in an elderly man they would have been treated with contempt; they could only be endured in one whose eighty years had been doubled by the hardness of his life lot.

In "Henry VIII." Mr. Irving had little to do. In that play the labour and the glory fell upon another, to the infinite delight of the public. In "Lear" Mr. Irving has everything to do; from beginning to end there is only one character. Even the fascinating Cordelia is but a silver cloud on the far horizon. "The King is coming!" is the cry of the play. His madness is more, as to display and effect, than the sense of all the others. The scene is stiff and cold until his wild hair is observed to approach the front, and then the whole spectacle is alight with feeling and purpose. The other actors are not to blame that, to a large extent, they are thrown into the shade; indeed, they are to be warmly congratulated upon their self-suppression and their passive sympathy. It is a hard task to play the part of two heartless and treacherous daughters, and a pitiful fate to have to represent the villainy of Edmund, yet all this was admirably done. It cannot be an easy thing to come forward to play the villain well, for the better the dramatic villain is played, the more is the actor compelled to recognise in his execration the exact degree of his success. So admirably can Mr. Irving himself play the villain that it is difficult to believe that any godparents ever, on his unconscious behalf, renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

In many minor parts—or along the subsidiary lines of great parts—Mr. Irving's subtlest power comes into effective play. Who, for example, can be more gentle or more graceful with a little child? Who could hug the "fool" more fondly than old King Lear? Then recall his wonderful recognitions of old friends. When, in "The Dead Heart," he is liberated from the Bastille, how old times slowly but surely dawn into consciousness, and how quickly the dawn hastens into the noon-tide of the tenderest fellowship and highest festival of joy! It is verily a resurrection. After eighteen years' entombment this political Lazarus comes forth to liberty, to leadership, to dominance. In " Lear " there are two wonderful instances of recognition—the recognition of Gloster and of Cordelia. Gloster is blind and bandaged. Cordelia has been long out of sight —if not in actual days, yet in depth of feeling—and the King himself is demented. Little by little things shape themselves in the memory and fancy of the King. There is something confusedly familiar in the voice of Gloster, which tone by tone settles into recognition. In the case of Cordelia the father gradually subdues the King, and instinct takes the place of reason; then, in a fine strain, comes the identification:

" Do not laugh at me,
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia."

The utterance of these words by Mr. Irving is simply thrilling. The tones, the glances, the approach, the embrace, lift up the words into new light, keen and tender as the brightness of a summer morning. The words themselves are by no means striking—are, indeed, the merest commonplace, but uttered with the natural pathos of a consummate actor, they carry the play to its most subduing climax. The humanity and the genius satisfy expectation in its most eager and jealous temper. Failure at that point would have ruined the play. Which was better, Lear or Cordelia, in that critical action? We must first settle which is better—the star of morning or the morning-star?

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As I opened this brief review with a reference to the religious standpoint, it may be well now to ask how the Church is to regard the stage as an educational institution. The stage cannot be put down. It responds to an instinct which is ineradicable, and which need not be ignoble. The parables of the New Testament are the sublimest recognition of that instinct. The drama is older than the theatre. Much of the greatest preaching has been dramatic, by which I mean that it has touched human life through the medium of story and parable, coloured and toned by a living fancy. Sometimes, too truly, the dramatic in preaching has degenerated into impossible anecdotes, most of them originating in the Far West of America, yet even such anecdotes testify to the overpowering force of the dramatic instincts when limited to their most vulgar conditions. My submission is that a properly-conducted stage might be the most powerful ally of the pulpit. I advance upon this submission, and contend that the function of the preacher is infinitely superior to the function of the actor. Whatever the preacher has to say that is distinctive he can trace to what he believes to be a Divine and authoritative origin. I hold the great preacher to be a spiritual medium. In his next evolution he will simply tell the people whatever may have been given him in the same hour to say. This does not mean that indolence will supersede industry. Through the indolent man God sends no messages. The true prophet will always be preparing himself. By learning, by meditation, by self-discipline, the true prophet will prepare his heart for the incoming of the Eternal Spirit, and the glory of heaven will be as a fire on the altar of the honest heart. Art preachers we have had in too great abundance. Mechanical talkers have brought upon the pulpit the disrepute of dulness. The age now waits for the messenger in whose loving heart there is the glow and the radiance of Divinest sympathy. The great actor himself would be the first to admit that the preacher cannot trace his own public secondariness to the poverty of his themes. Where the preacher falls behind the actor, it is because the preacher does not realise the majesty and the tenderness, the vehemence and urgency, of his own message.

NOTE XXVI.

GLADSTONE *v.* SALISBURY.

SUMMING-UP OF THE JUDGE.

GENTLEMEN of the Jury, the trial of these consolidated cases is now, happily, approaching a termination. As the Lord Chief Justice of the Moon, I congratulate you upon the impending close of your labours. It is now my duty, gentlemen, to lay the case before you with the strictest impartiality; and if now and again I should unhappily lapse into a mixed metaphor, you must in all charity remember that, through no fault of my own, I was born in an island where mixed metaphors excite no mean prejudices—a country "surrounded by the melancholy main."

Gentlemen of the Jury, both parties in this action are deeply interested in Hibernia, the pride of all who know her, and the envy of those who are excluded from her favour. Both parties are suitors for her hand. Each party promises to do better for her than the other. So high, indeed, does feeling run on both sides that they would be delighted to murder one another, in a dramatic sense, if they could do so with proper regard to the etiquette of society. Gentlemen, they are only restrained from fatal violence by the gossamer of conventional hypocrisy.

Gentlemen, fix your attention upon the parties. You have heard them for yourselves. The plaintiff is no longer criminally young. He appears to be a well-informed and somewhat thoughtful man. His manner in the witness-box was that of much energy, bordering, indeed, upon a considerable degree of self-confidence. At the same time, we cannot deny the indications of an intelligence which is probably in excess of that of the bulk of the masses.

The defendant is also a person of some intelligence, and not altogether without a certain elementary culture of manners. Probably they are both more than average specimens of what can be done by the Board Schools of a corrupt and decaying empire. The one works with an axe; the other with a crucible. The one swears big; the other genteelly affirms. Still, they both love Hibernia, and they long, each in his own way, to shed their blood in illustration of their idolatry.

Gentlemen of the Jury, you must bring a dispassionate judgment to bear upon the case. Gentlemen, you must beware of the seductions of sentiment. Gentlemen, in Heaven's name do not give way to those hollow emotions which are at once the ruin of justice and the wreck of patriotism. Gentlemen, you must steel your tender feelings whilst I lay the soul-harrowing facts before you in all their complicated and confounding simplicity.

Gentlemen, the parties to this action proceed upon two distinctly opposite policies. The motto of the one policy is "Union of Hearts"; the motto of the other is "Resolute Control." Between these policies Hibernia, the calm and passionless, is torn with anguish. She loves them both. When she hears of the union of hearts, she says she could die happy if she could but see it; when she hears of resolute control, she springs to her feet, and says she adores the man who is master of his own house. She looks upon handcuffs as the best bracelets.

Gentlemen of the Jury, the case has been unhappily complicated by the action of a third party—always a dangerous party in love affairs—who would do something in the way of union of hearts, and something in the way of resolute control. You heard the witnesses Devonshire and Chamberlain, also persons of some mental capacity, and not without a degree of rude earnestness. They would allow Hibernia to take a weekly walk by herself in the society of a constable. They would allow her to buy her own clothes at prices which they would fix. They would be indulgent so long as, with one eye, they could watch her movements, and with the other listen to her secret conversation. Gentlemen, if I lapse into a broken metaphor, I plead the precedent of ages.

Gentlemen, the witnesses who have passed before you must have left a vivid impression upon your minds. The witness Saunderson would impress you deeply. His placidity, his delicate use of terms, his cultured self-control, very powerfully influenced the court. The witness Balfour was most frank and emphatic. He was like a razor without a handle. The witness Morley was cold, creedless, cruel in his memory of facts, and brutal in forcing premises to their logical issues. He was a shameless critic, for he no sooner found a flaw in his opponent's dressing-gown than he thrust both arms into it, merely by way of pointing it out in a friendly spirit. If these witnesses could be shut up in the same cell overnight, one of them would not be there in the morning.

Gentlemen, the plaintiff and the defendant have both been before you on oath. The plaintiff, though hesitant in speech, spoke warmly in praise of the union of hearts. Hibernia was obviously moved. Under her impassive demeanour it was easy to detect the play of those emotions which are at once the weakness and the strength of her sex. Gentlemen, Hibernia is a woman. It would be wicked to deny it. Gentlemen, a woman is flattered when two rival suitors are in quest of her, one climbing up a fire-escape, and the other pelting her with Coercion Acts. But what must be the torn and discoloured condition of her feelings when one of her suitors is a lord and the other his creator? Gentlemen, put away your cambric, and subdue your surgent emotions.

Gentlemen of the Jury, your verdict will be awaited with intense anxiety by both the parties. Moments are eternities, yet, gentlemen, you must not be indecently hasty. You must weigh the evidence, not by putting the penny into the slot, but by standing up to the foot-rule with a patriotic indifference to the state of the weather. It is in this spirit that British juries have established their immortal reputation for so mixing up the facts of the case as to return verdicts which have staggered the intelligence of mankind.

One of you asked me whether you are to remember Mitchelstown. The more you forget, the better. I believe there is a cock-and-bull story about Mitchelstown—a mere pleasantry. Quite a novelty in the use of fire-irons, or, to speak more technically, of fire-arms. It was as if a man aimed at a kangaroo in the Zoo, and the shot rebounded and killed a pig at Whitechapel. The incident need in no way affect the verdict.

And now, Gentlemen of the Jury, I dismiss you to your room with one or two remarks of a broader sort. The eyes of the Empire are upon you. Europe stills her breath in expectation. Australia can neither eat nor sleep until you give your verdict. A calculated and expected eclipse cannot take place while you are deliberating. "The gaiety of nations" awaits your verdict. Hibernia hides her beauty behind her fabled shamrock until you pronounce her fate. Civilisation halts for you. Ireland blocks the way. Gentlemen, I give you no hint or sign of my own view. I have dined with the plaintiff and with the defendant, and yet they both retain their sanity. In my private capacity I have written leading articles against them both; but sitting here, on this seat of justice, presiding at a bench untainted by a bribe, addressing a jury beyond temptation, and moved to the very depths of my soul by a subject of which I know absolutely nothing, I dismiss you to your duties, and I retire to my usual enjoyments.

After being absent three years and a half, the jury inquired if refreshments could be supplied, because the prospect of agreement was farther off than ever.

NOTE XXVII.

WHAT a curious world it is! Yet it is criminal to leave it through the aid of "a bare bodkin." Society will not allow its humblest member to hang himself behind the laundry door. He may do so, but the Church will pronounce no blessing on his bones. Society will part with its guests only on certain conditions.

Yet society will not keep its own unemployed people. They may go to Tower Hill, of historic memory. Yet there is some excuse for society. Feeling tender-hearted towards one unemployed man, I got him to put a lock on a door, and he cleverly put it on upside down. I could not afford to employ him. He seemed to be a decent man, and to have had a Sunday-school training. But he was nothing at locks. My wonder was not that he was unemployed, but that he ever got a day's work.

I employed a man to copy a circular letter for me, and to superscribe to it a list of names I gave him. He wrote the superscriptions thus: "Dear Henry Smith, Esq.," "Dear Hugh Conning, Esq." I could not stand it. Fifty copies thus written! Fifty sheets of paper wasted! I dismissed him. He is now on some Tower Hill, swearing politically at large.

Are all the unemployed like this? Far from it. Some of the best men I have ever known are out of work. I see no prospect of the congestion being relieved. Expedients are only momentary. There must be a redistribution of men over the face of the globe. Not a change of parishes, but a change of continents, is the thing.

And the Land Question must be faced. The land should not be landlorded. Let there be compensation, but let the land be restored to the whole people. Not what my lord the duke has done, but what God meant to be done, is the question. Even a good duke makes a poor deity. We do not want to know how many cottages the earl or duke has built; we want to know how he and his forefathers came into possession of the land. If honestly, let him be paid. Nothing unjust should be done. The nation must hold the land. Proprietorship in land should be made impossible to the individual.

But the public-house will upset any land scheme. "Landlord" is an ambiguous word. It is a publican's title as well as a duke's. Let us get rid of it in both senses, especially and immediately in the publican's sense. If there was not one public-house in England there would not be one pauper. The workhouse would become a school, and the gaol a gymnasium, except as it might be wanted for the correction of delinquent directors and peccant magistrates.

The gaol might, too, be wanted for the punishment of avaricious priestcraft. The worst priestcraft is that of non-sectarianism. There is a "holiness" rotten as the apples of Sodom. I can do with honest infidelity, but I hate irreligious religion.

I feel safer now that Parliament has assembled. I had almost given up hope of ever seeing it again. It is so young, I thought it might have gone astray. But all is now well. The guns are loaded. Already the first harmless crash has fallen, and things remain much as before. The legislators dine nightly at each other's houses, and the wine-cellars are often lighted up. The senators are, no doubt, dying of anxiety, yet they dine well, and make use of much uncanonical language. Is England played out?

I don't want my newspaper to be simply critical, simply fault-finding. I want it to be also educational. Every paper should have one guiding article, masterly in conception and expression, in politics, in literature, in art, or in religion. I always distinguish between a newspaper and a scrap-book. I do not wish to speak disrespectfully of a rag-bag, yet I cannot honestly regard it as literature. I speak generally, not specifically.

Very few movements interest me more than the Leasehold Enfranchisement programme. The idea is right, and should be carried out to the highest development. It is a national question. It penetrates to the innermost motive and sanctuary of patriotism. I always follow the movement with cordial interest. I trust that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will be officially swept off the face of the earth.

NOTE XXVIII.

To preach is to lay down your very life for the sake of others. It is no namby-pamby work, no trick in intellectual confectionery, but a real oblation and sacrifice in the interests of others. Preachers cannot be made. They come forth from the unseen altar clothed in the white linen of simplicity and love, and burn with the fire which warms the universe. There is no ice in love.

Once I was under the impression that if people could read and write they would be virtuous, and through their virtue would save the public a good deal of expense in the way of prisons and workhouses. It is the sloppiest nonsense. The directors of public companies can read and write. The authors of swindling prospectuses may even know a little French. Learning does more harm to society than can be done by ignorance. Ignorance may throw stones; knowledge can deposit dynamite.

Christian institutions are now being dragged through the mire with a vengeance. What with magic-lanterns instead of sermons, gymnasia in place of pulpits, and alphabetic letters instead of plain titles, I am simply bewildered. A new lingo makes me feel myself a stranger on the earth and an alien in the Church.

The new lingo sounds to me like this: The P. I.

G. movement is being sustained very ably by the F. O. G. bands, and they, in their turn, are powerful rivals of the D. O. G. brigades, and if a G. A. S. club could be set up in every hamlet, we should hear less of the H. O. P. scheme, and secure a larger circulation for the P. O. P. magazine.

All this may possibly tell for good upon the masses, and if so I will not say a word against it; but I think the masses are not to be drawn to the ecclesiastical bridle by any such empty sieves. The masses are often strong in common-sense. They like to be treated in a frank and manly style, and not after the manner of "Will you walk into my parlour?" Never deceive a man into religion. Never capsule your piety with a game at bagatelle.

Herein Spurgeon was the wonder of the Church. Without gown or bands, without a choir or a fiddle, without an organ or a drum, he drew the largest congregation in the world, and held it for a lifetime. George Eliot might sneer at him, but the fact remained that, without accessories of any kind, with only the common ground for a pedestal, he filled the world with his influence, and outran the fleetest genius that ever started to tell nothing to nobody.

Some people are very much depressed by the M. W. M. movement. "What!" they exclaim, "£24,000 a week for finding a missing word, and so many institutions begging?" Christianity, as represented by the churches and all related charities, raises vastly more than £24,000 a week. The devil is spasmodic. We see all the bubbles he blows. True work is deep work, silent work, incessant work. The eternal will overthrow the infernal. For some issues we must wait. We can order a hothouse, but we must wait for a summer.

Orthodoxy must also have its gin-and-water, or its sneezy condiments. Salvation by picnic is not a Bible word. It must within five years come to nothing. Let us go to the Alps and bury our animosities in snow. Let us go to Chicago and show how Christians can travel for next to nothing, and yet pile up a handsome profit. Let us go to Jerusalem, and during a picnic on Olivet get ourselves so mixed up with one another as not to know who had godmothers and who had none.

When will men undertake to Christianise London? Create strong centres in the City, and the circumference will feel the vital thrill. Call at Constantinople, if you like, and go on a trip to Jerusalem, or buy Saratoga trunks and be off to Chicago, but remember that the blood of London is on your skirts, and the citizens of your own metropolis may be perishing for lack of knowledge. The men we now want are men who will tackle the City, and build an altar with the very stones of Mammon. Oh, for a converted London!

It would be bad for trade, though, at the first—bad for the public-house, bad for the racecourse, bad for the brothel, bad for swindlers, bad for liars; nevertheless, afterwards it would be summer and harvest, abundance and sweet content.

NOTE XXIX.

SUPERSTITION dies hard. Everybody has been saying so ever since there was nothing else to say. I wonder on whose starry mind that wisdom first alighted? The last enemy that shall be destroyed in literature is Anonymousness. If you casually remark that William James says so-and-so, people say, Who on earth is William James? But if you say the Christmas number of the *Midland Bugler* says so-and-so, people bow in an attitude of dumb prostration. Whereas, when all comes to all, it is discovered that the said authoritative Christmas number was written by William James.

William would be laughed off any platform, because his manner is heavy, his tongue is leaden, and his language is lame on both feet. But when William comes out with the *Midland Bugler* for a mask, the very people who laughed at him quote him as an authority. But, then, they did not know it was William. That's the point. When William smeared himself with ink, they thought he was a discoloured deity. It was only William.

They say—because they are mean enough to say anything—that preaching is dying out. I am quite sure that leading articles are having a hard time of it. People now like to have even leaders cut short. As a matter of fact, they cut them short without making any pretence about it. They are fond of "bits," *Live Bits*, *Jumping Bits*, *Laughing Bits*, and a limited company may be expected, as soon as confidence in directors is restored, to bring out *Bits of Bits*, or journalism reduced to spoon-meat. Preaching cannot be scissored down to that.

Leading articles puzzle me. Whoever the Prime Minister of the day may be, this is what I read about him: "Last night the Premier outshone himself in every quality that has created the highest reputation of British eloquence." Then I take up another leader, and it says: "Last night the Premier emptied the whole English dictionary upon the heads of as unintelligent an assembly as ever gathered in the historic name of Englishmen." Now, which of the writers am I to believe, for they both attend the same parish church? Indeed, one of them is the clergyman.

Man is odd. It is difficult to fit "the humans" with the boots of consistency. The boots *will* wear out at the heels. The man who nailed his colours to the mast has got over the difficulty by selling the mast to another man. The budding statesman, whose motto was "No boycotting," has given up his laundress because she washes for the other side. He says, "No, ma'am, you shall never boil my shirt in the caldron which holds the linen of an enemy." As if a laundress ever boiled any man's shirt when she could hide the dirt with chemicals!

It is absurd to say that there are no clever laundresses. I had one who needed so much soap every week that I made a study of her character. I considered her from a strictly moral point of view. Sixteen bars of brown soap every week made me wonder if it is true that cleanliness is next to godliness, because a pew-rent was nothing to my soap-bill. After the soap, the preaching came moderate. The laundress herself is dead, but she has left a large family all in the same way of business.

Are we ever going to get the electric light all over, and pretty reasonable in price? The gas people have been so kind to me that I am thinking of presenting them with a piece of plate, as the new maid has just dropped one on the hearthstone. One gasman sold me a "governor" which was to save me 25 per cent. Another sold me a burner which would save me 25 per cent. more. At the end of the quarter my gas bill was nine and eightpence more than it had ever been.

A third gasman brought me a patent, guaranteed not only to purify the light and steady the uneasy flame, but to save me at least 50 per cent. in the item of consumption. I said, "Will you repeat that in the presence of a witness?" He said he would. I then brought up a bull terrier, blind of one eye, but seeing very clearly with the other. The man took the patent away and left me with the dog. Unconscious influence.

I believe the alarming rumours about Mr. Gladstone's health. They are not one whit too alarming. That a man over eighty-three should have full possession of every faculty, and should be as deeply interested in politics as any youngster of sixty, is indeed a very alarming rumour to his political enemies. If he will only see that Protestantism is protected, my daily prayer shall be, "Lang may your lum reek," a prayer which warms and gladdens every Scottish heart.

Dr. Johnson said that a man who would make a pun would pick a pocket. Whereupon I venture to say that a man who would make an epigram would eat an elephant. The one is just as true as the other. "Papers will please copy." Some of our boys reading this remark in the colonies may recall old times with a shudder. I don't mind if they do. Anything to make the boys more content with their lot.

In looking over the markets as reported in the papers, I see with great satisfaction, that, whilst olive-oil is quiet, turpentine is firm, and that, notwithstanding the severity of the weather, pig-iron is looking up. This is intensely interesting to all those social workers—genuine sons of toil—who are unsuspecting enough to believe that the voice of the markets is the voice of God.

NOTE XXX.

I CALLED on myself the other day, and found myself comfortably seated in the middle of a cold bath, looking cheerfully, though dubiously, for the Turkish bath sheet, which I sorrowfully discovered to have been taken away by my eldest boy to cover the roof of a rabbit-hutch in the back-garden of a neighbour whose politics make me despair of the progress of mankind. I was not surprised to find myself keenly nettled by this act of filial disregard for a parent's position and feelings, though I controlled my emotions sufficiently to wrap myself in one of the boy's own sheets, which I reinserted, in a damp condition, into his bed, with a consciousness that I had got ahead of my offspring. I queried myself on many topics, and I fancy I got out of myself all that was available at the time. It is a way of mine not to leave many pickings for dogs that come in very late. I always say they should be in good time if they really mean business, and if they don't mean it, they should not come in at all.

Says I to myself, more in a chatty than in an academic way, "Now, on the whole," says I, "where were you born, governor?"

Says I, "The question is mean and frivolous, and is more adapted to a toad than to a man." Says I, "Mend it."

Then said the Other Eye, "Mend it yourself."

"Very good," said I. "Then, *why* was I born? is a deeper question, and one that I can drown in. I never asked to be born; I never had the faintest desire to see this world. I could no sooner turn round in the world than a man told me that I was descended from Adam and Eve, and I told him it was a lie, and he ought to be ashamed of himself for talking such abominable nonsense to a little boy not old enough to have any pocket-money. Then says I to him, after I had cooled awhile, 'And who are you descended from?' And says he, 'From Adam and Eve.' And then I knew it was a joke, and let it pass. But if you really want to know why I was born, I really cannot tell you. It is an awful thing to be born; next to dying, it is about the most awful thing."

"Well," says I, wishing to make matters as cheerful as possible, "what time do you rise in the morning?"

Said I pathetically, ordering the tears back to their briny cells, "Which morning?"

"Any morning—every morning," was the gruff reply. Said I, "That all depends. As a rule, I never get up so long as I can lie still. I never like to get up thoughtlessly, because you might hit something with your shins, and hurt it past mending. I always like to wake just in time to find it is not time to get up. There—just at that very point—waking is 'twice blest': it blesseth him that wakes, and him that turneth over on the other side; it humours the imagination and draws the teeth of conscience."

"Thanks," said Eye. "What rules do you lay down in the family?"

Said I "Their number is innumerable, and their value is more than rubies. I press upon my sons the duty and the dawny delight of getting up quite soon. I tell them how opally the sky is when they are not looking at it, and how extremely, and even aggressively, diamonded the meadows are about four o'clock on a midsummer morning. I say, 'Boys,' I say, 'up betimes is your parent's motto.' They cannot pelt me with the *tu quoque*, because I have trained them carefully in a way which enables them to believe that I write in the bedroom, and that even a mouse could not hear my movements, so desirous am I not to disturb the slumbers of innocence. They know that I have a talent for writing verse, and happily they are too finely strung to ask me to read it to them. I own that prejudiced moralists might find fault with this state of affairs; but jaundice paints everything yellow, and jaundice I will not encourage."

"And with regard to your girls," said the Other Eye, "what rules do you lay down?"

"Well," said I meditatively—I always say "Well" when I don't know what else to say—"the exact number of the rules is 2,017. I grieve to say it, I do."

"And are they all kept?" said the Other Eye.

"Every blessed one of them," I answered. "The

2,017 rules are not only duly observed, but honoured."

"That is very wonderful," said the Other Eye.

I admitted it was; yet, to the credit of the seven girls who curl their auburn hair every night at the expense of their indulgent parent, I added that, if I were to extend the rules, and make them the even number of 2,018, I believe the last would be as cheerfully obeyed as the first. Said I, "Not only do I believe it: I know it, and I glory in it."

"Now," said the Other Eye, "coming to politics."

"Come on," said I.

"How do you stand on that critical ground?"

"Tip-tip above every other man in Europe," said I, in a tone of distressing humbleness; "I am the man who brought in the ecclesiastical millennium—"

"Kind heavens!" the Other Eye interrupted.

"I did," I calmly, and somewhat majestically, continued, "and all Europe knows I am the man."

"How did you do it?"

"Got all the clerics to Switzerland, shut them up in a comfortable *gasthaus*, turned the key upon them, and listened at the keyhole. Bless you! in the morning, when the man brought up the shaving-water, the archbishops would only shave with Dissenting razors, and Dissenters lathered themselves with cathedral soap. I felt sure I could do it, and I did it. It could never have been done in England. I have long held that words are the ruin of union and the curse of mankind, so I got the clerics into a country where they could not speak a word of the language, and I lent them an alpenstock apiece, and took their portraits in groups; and from that moment the sun rose in the West, and swallows built their cosy nests in the broiling snow."

"But how about politics?"

"Just the same; the principle applies all round. I am offering free tickets and free beds to Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone, and I am confident the Jungfrau will bring about the lion-and-lamb idea—quite a favourite idea of the lion's. Then I shall take the doctors over—the allopaths and the homœopaths, the orthodox bolus and the heterodox pilule; and on the slopes of Mont Blanc they shall bury their hatchets with decorous joy. Mark me! on this point my blood is up."

The Other Eye behaved respectfully because it took in the situation at a glance; it took in the meaning of my fine enthusiasm; it glittered in sympathy; it melted into speech:

"How delightful!"

"Yes," said I, "but how doleful for Switzerland! At the foot of every mountain an arbitration! On the top story of every hotel an armed neutrality! On the edge of every glacier men writing their wills in hot haste! Yet Switzerland is the place, or Belgium, because of being neutral ground, and neutral ground is the only place on which you can murder a man with any show of dignity or moral satisfaction."

"Thanks," said the Other Eye.

"No doubt of it," I replied; "but don't play the donkey, and take me too literally. Some wooden-heads would regard all this as an affidavit, and write misleading articles to prove that it is not true. Have you seen wooden-heads?"

"I think so."

"Then, avoid them; never lend them a penny. Cultivate your imagination, and look for the innermost meaning of things; and when you come back for a second interview, we will talk over men and things, and make shrouds for the overshadowing nobodies who ought to have been in their graves long ago."

When I found the lecture fit come on I gave over.

NOTE XXXI.

"THE man from Blankley's" got where the amateur Egyptologist should have been, and Lord Strathsporran got where the man from Blankley's was expected. Hence the comedy of errors. *Punch* has told all about Lord Strathsporran in his happiest vein. It is for me to tell what happened in the case of the other man, to whom I will refer as Amateur. It will be remembered that the host's name was Cartouche, and that he was deeply interested in the antiquities of Egypt.

Probably Amateur, "the man from Blankley's," may have heard that there is such a place as Egypt, but that was all. Both Amateur and Strathsporran were absolute strangers to Mr. Cartouche, the difference being that Strathsporran had inquired by letter if he could see the Egyptian curiosities, and had been politely invited to do so, and to dine at the same time. He went next door by mistake, and by mistake Amateur went to Cartouche's.

"Glad to make your acquaintance. Glad to show you all my Egyptian curios. Glad to have such a bond of union, Mr. Claymore."

Amateur was astounded, but said nothing. He inferred that he was a veiled figure—"a sort of incog," he called himself.

"You have given a good deal of time to Egyptian studies, Mr. Claymore."

"Oh yes, sir, and don't regret it."

"Are you prepared to identify 'the tabernacles of Ham' with Egypt, or do you prefer the Arabic Misr?"

"I do, sir," said Amateur, "though I have no prejudice against Ham—far from it; but the other seems more natural like, and more civil."

Cartouche put up his eye-glass.

"I once spent six months in Ghareeyeh, in the northern province."

"God bless my soul, sir!" said Amateur; "I never so much as heard of it. Hot or cold, as the common saying is?"

Here Mrs. Cartouche entered, and spoiled the effect.

Later:

"You are aware, Mr. Claymore, that a little above Thebes the sandstone commences?"

"Yes, sir, so you say."

"Wonderful scenery midway between the Nile and the Red Sea, where the primitive rocks burst into full view——"

"Burst, do they?"

"Yes; through the later formation. Why, one of the granite mountains is said to be 6,000 feet high."

Aloud: "Glad to hear you say so, sir." To himself: "Comical old crank, this, and so very condescending and free! Wonder what the dickens he thinks I am."

"I often say," continued Mr. Cartouche, "that in many respects the lake El-Menzeeleh is the prettiest water I ever saw."

"Salty at all?" said Amateur.

"Well, yes, a little; it is mixed. It receives the waters of the Melusian and the Pelusiac canals——"

"Canals?"

"Yes."

"Got canals out there, have they? But what I do like, sir, of a fine Sunday is just a little quiet dawdle round about Virginia Water, or it's not bad down by Richmond yonder on a real sunny day."

Cartouche (to himself): "Most extraordinary! Man's got rather a shapely face, yet I suspect a vein of insanity. It may be affectation, though. Perhaps he thinks I have no relics." (Eyes him attentively. Remarks on the weather, and Amateur brightens into intelligence.)

"That deuced floody, sloppy, eternal rainy sort of thing is what we could do without in this country. They might take it over there and make a few more canals, and jolly pleased I should be. You'll excuse me, sir, making so free, but I see you are not like those hide-bound old Pharisees [Amateur has had wine] I visited the other night."

"Yes," said Mr. Cartouche; "we have rain enough for the *ibis religiosa* to wade in."

"Yes; but mum's the word," said Amateur, "and Egypt is as good a thing to talk about as something nearer home. The people, I mean," said Amateur, "were jolly queer. The old lady told me how much wine I was to drink, and how very little

I was to say, and she told me point-blank that her eye was upon me."

Cartouche (to himself): "Confirms my opinion. He is a little off the balance. It may be mere affectation, but I doubt it. Perhaps I had better fool him a little."

Amateur (to himself): "Nothing stiff here. Treats me as an equal. True gentleman. Looks it. Calls me Claymore, and not Mulligans. I don't like his wife's look, though. He'll catch it."

"You'll excuse me, sir, I know you will. I would take more kindly to the profession if every one was like you. Between ourselves, sir, I may give it as my opinion that ceremony keeps friends apart a good deal, and it ought to be put down. There ought to be a meeting about it in Hyde Park. I know a man who could say many fine things about it, and cutting, too."

This was Mr. Cartouche's chance. He must do something.

Eyeing Mr. Claymore pleasantly, he said:

"Try my wife on the subject of Egypt. Ask her what she thinks of Lane's theories of the dynasties. Do not say that I sent you. You like to make friends with the ladies, don't you?"

"Love it. Live for it. Know how to do it all day."

"Then success to you," said Mr. Cartouche.

"Madam," said Amateur, in the best Blankley style, "your husband has favoured me with some remarks on the subject of Egypt."

"And I, sir," said the lady, "will beg you not further to refer to it. That one subject is the rock on which we split. If you could persuade my husband to give up Egypt, you would be a friend of the family."

To himself: "Thought so—thought he had a slate off. Saw it in his eye. No sooner did I get into the house than he was off to Egypt. He should see a doctor. He should get a nurse. This man should be watched. I would like the job." To her: "Madam, may I express my heartfelt agreement with you? May I thank you? I read your meaning, and I respect it. I have been wondering why on earth he should talk to me upon Egypt. It is a country for which I have no respect."

"But I thought you were an Egyptologist, and that you wanted to talk about Egypt?"

"Heaven forbid, madam! I am an honest man."

"Have you never been in Egypt?"

"Never. Nothing would induce me to visit a land of pagans and of robbers, and, I may say, a land of canals."

Mrs. Cartouche walked towards her husband, and he rose to meet her.

Whisperingly: "Who is this creature, Stephen? Out of what Egyptian canal did you drag him? Listen to his accent. No Cockney in Whitechapel is lower bred. Stephen, you must at once remove him."

Amateur explains the case in detail.

"Then you are a dummy from Blankley's?"

"A sort of incog., sir."

"You fill a vacant seat when a guest fails?"

"That is my evening profession. Dress-coat found."

"And you ought to have gone next door?"

"I suppose so."

"Then, what in the name of justice is to be done?"

"A guinea settles it."

And prithee, reader, are we not all doing this very thing? Is it not a mixed-up world we are housed in? Is not some one else living on your money? Are you not dining at the wrong table? Whose coat are you wearing? Yes; it is a world of mismatches, yet it swings round the sun in obedience to the music which rules the silent dance of the planets.

NOTE XXXII.

It was Miranda who was so sensitive. She had a right to be, for she was so very tall that all the street stared at her when she went out alone, and all the town was on the giggle when she walked with any one else, the other one being reduced to a degree of disgraceful insignificance. Dear Miranda felt everything so very much. In fact, she felt everything long before any one thought of doing it. She said it was in the air, then it was in her bones, and finally it was in her nerves. People who took things freshly and naturally were very vulgar in dear Miranda's estimation. She said they were "born out of due season," though what she meant I never fully knew. I think she intended the remark to be cutting without being overmuch unkind, but I never pressed her on the point. Miranda's pale father was also very sensitive. He was a tailor, but he called himself a clothier, and always lived in a corner house by way of preference.

He was so very shrinking and modest that he always felt deeply hurt if he was not asked to speak at every tea-meeting held in connection with my little village chapel; and, as he always spoke mostly in rhyme, he added the sensitiveness of the poet's temperament to the delicacy of the clothier's occupation, without feeling the inconvenience of never paying any pew-rent.

Miranda sang a little, and her father recited much —always his own composition. So between them, and in view of their extreme sensitiveness, our preparations for the fourteen annual tea-meetings, by the aid of which we kept up the flavour of our orthodoxy, were often embarrassing, and sometimes disappointing. Miranda's father had no ear for rhyme. His sensitiveness did not lie in that direction. In his comic pieces one line would end with "wardrobe" and the other with "fireirons," yet we did not venture to point this out, because we knew his remarkable refinement and sensitiveness, and perhaps he might have felt it. One old lady in the congregation—I say one to contradistinguish her from the many—said quite loudly at one of the meetings that he knew no more poetry than her pattens knew, but she was stifled by the poet's friends, who enjoyed seeing the poet make a fool of himself. To several, this spectacle was the best part of some of the fourteen annual tea-meetings.

They were not poets themselves, but they stuck up for the general principle that "fair play's a jewel," and the right of the citizen to show how wrong he could be. They said they were democrats, and I am bound to admit that they looked it. Whether I so acted as to mislead Miranda as to my estimate of her father's poetry I cannot positively say, yet I fear it must have been so, because she was in the habit of saying, in a confidential tone, "Father's made another piece."

"Does he make the pieces easily?" I inquired.

"Sometimes he does."

"Then," said I, "at other times he finds it a tough job?"

"Oh yes; in this very last piece he was trying to make the word 'avalanche' rhyme with the word 'volcano,' and he couldn't do it nohow (*sic*), and I told him I would ask you if he could not say 'avalancheo,' and in this way get it."

Thus the very thing I detested had become a kind of bond of union between me and Miranda. I was to be a teacher of epics! I was to instruct the clothier in pentameters!

"But," said I, "you do not know how sensitive I am."

"And so is dear father," said Miranda; "and they say I got it from him; and we both say, as shouldn't, that poor mother feels nothing—not even the slights and snubs she gets at the chapel, in particular at the Dorcas, and more nor once at that dirty little Band of Hope."

"Bless me!" I exclaimed, "all this is news."

"Because mother wouldn't say nothing about it," Miranda explained. "She don't see the slight; she makes out that people don't mean it; and when we tell her that people have snubbed her, she always says, 'Why should they?' and all that sort of rot."

"Your mother is a Christian, Miranda."

"But she's no proper feeling about her."

"I think she has, Miranda."

"You would not think so if you knew her better. She would allow even the deacons to trample upon her. And there's that fussy little secretary of the goose and coal club actually makes game of father's poetry, and mother never gives it back to him."

"What a lovely character she must be!"

"But hard to live with," said Miranda; "and all for want of proper pride. That's what father calls it. He says there is a proper pride, and he means to keep to it. Father won't stand no nonsense even from the chairman of the Local Board. Father says that man has not got an idea in his head that's worth a brass button. Once father showed him a few verses he had made about the main sewer they are cutting just outside the village, and father says he was ashamed of the language that rude man used."

"You don't happen to remember a word or two of it?" said I.

"Father would never tell us. He says it turns him blue to think of it. He says there are many reasons for turning that man away."

Miranda's mother was no relation of hers. She was her mother, in the registrar's sense of that term, yet she was a stranger to Miranda. Round-faced and much shining about the eyes and the upper cheeks, she was most frank and downright in all her thought and speech. There was no need to tell her to call a spade a spade, for she could never think of calling it by any other name, notwithstanding its possible sensitiveness to indignity.

How she came to marry Miranda's father was always a puzzle to me until I was told that she had a little income in her own right. Little incomes may account for great inconsistencies. Miranda was their only child, but tall enough for several. They who had Miranda had a family.

"Then," I said to Miranda's mother, "*you* do not easily or foolishly take offence?"

"I never think any offence is meant," said she.

"Your husband and daughter are more sensitive?"

"I don't call it by such a fine name," she replied. "That's where so many people get wrong. If they would call it nasty, dirty pride they might get cured. That's what I call it. I say there is nothing else in it. As to taking offence, I am one of the people that bugs don't bite."

I told you Miranda's mother called things by their right names.

Miranda's mother was a Christian, though a poor hand at theology.

In this poor driving life of ours there should be only time for sympathy and help. Words of bitterness spoil what little music there is. The most of men are better than they seem to be. Let us shoot down all evil, but spare the man who does it. The soul is bigger than the sin.

NOTE XXXIII.

It is no use denying the law of compensation; there it is. Man is a self-comforting animal. I have long known that. He calls drunkenness dipsomania; he calls theft kleptomania. Everybody knows that. But a man of high spirits has just passed through the Bankruptcy Court, and he feels himself comforted by calling that fact an "episode." I like the vagueness of the word; besides, it does not grate upon the feelings. Why should it? Especially on mine, as I am not a creditor.

Be on your guard, if you please; I speak feelingly. A friend said to me:

"That man began life with three-ha'pence; how much do you think he is worth now?"

I cautiously suggested:

"Five thousand."

"No," said my friend, "he's not worth a brass farthing."

Yet I call that monster my friend! My charity has blinded my judgment. He will be trying to borrow money of me in our next interview. Impudence is a thriving weed.

A minister in the North tells me that, because he is anti-Gladstonian on the one question of Ireland, his principal subscriber has given up his sitting.

Yet this is the sort of man who vapours against coercion and frowns upon boycotting! It is very sad. This is the shady side of Dissent. I am a Gladstonian heart and soul, yet I would not take the bread out of the mouth of an honest opponent. Nor would Mr. Gladstone. He is the soul of honour and generosity.

Poor preachers! I pity some of them. Let them say what is unpopular, and hassocks will be sent for by the dozen. So much for Christian manhood; so much for Christian love. No; I will correct myself. So much for the *want* of them.

It must not be thought that ministers have more than their share of trouble. Some have none. We do not know when a merchant loses a customer, but five hundred people may know when a seatholder gives up his seat. As a shoemaker, you know well enough that many customers have left you because of your bad leather and your bad fit. If yours had been sermon-shoes, all your other customers would have heard of it.

When I was a young pastor, a greengrocer left me because of a sermon I preached on bad weights and scales. He said such a subject should be preached upon on week-days, not on Sundays. This holy soul never attended a week-day service. Man is odd.

I never read or write anonymous letters, but I receive bagfuls. I have thrown into the fire "An Admirer," "A Seat-holder," and "A Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ." Why do writers hide their names? Why do they waste their stamps? If you have anything to say to a man, say it openly, kindly, modestly. Never put a blanket round your head when you are going to kick a man. It has a mean look, and I am sure you have no wish to be mean.

Yet, meanness is a very subtle business. It was mean of you to put a penny into the collection with the air of a man who was putting in half a crown. You tried to look silver when you should have looked cheap copper. You cannot sanctify fraud by singing very loudly.

It was mean of you to give a thousand pounds for the conversion of the heathen when you were not giving your own young men in the warehouse enough to marry on. If they committed sin, I hold you responsible for their guilt. Never save a black man at the risk of damning a white one. First evangelise your own warehouse, and then draw a cheque for China.

It is mean of you to keep a partner to do your dirty work. You try to play the gentleman and the Christian by letting him tell all the lies and turn all the thumb-screws. I am ashamed of you. And you a church-goer! you a psalm-singer! you an Exeter Hall chairman! It is very horrible—very infernal.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have a capital idea in view. It is to make all their leases practically perpetual. This would work immensely to the advantage of all the parties concerned. I hope no time will be lost in giving effect to the idea. It is statesmanlike, and will without doubt be very popular.

Perhaps you do not know Mr. and Mrs. Bulson. Yes, you do; they live in your house, or next door. Did you ever speak to the people next door? They are so funny. They are quite a study. They look at you from behind the window-curtains, and grin at you, just the same as you do when you think they are not looking. Man is a self-deceiving animal.

So the swift weeks come and go. The invisible thief, called Time, steals the gold of our life, and brings our body to the pauper-bed of the grave. It is a mean hospitality, and would be meaner and deadlier still had we no hope of the generous feast beyond.

NOTE XXXIV.

Two people in my village congregation were specially "observant." They seemed to be all eyes. They claimed that nothing occurred within their circle which they did not at once and completely discern and estimate. That was the explanation of all their personal remarks upon other people. If I did not see what they saw, it was because I was not "observant." This remark they used as a kind of nettle with which they stung me in the very act of offering their frugal hospitality.

"Did you see how the elders behaved during your sermon last Sunday morning?"

"No, Mr. Bulson, I did not."

"Then you should really be more observant. I saw, my wife saw—in fact, how anybody could help seeing is a perfect mystery to me."

The fact is, I never see how anybody behaves during my sermons. I am so busy with the sermons themselves as to have no time to look at the people one by one. Yet the remark made by these observant people, the Bulsons, gave me pain. It is easy to plague a minister. Remarks which he could treat with contempt if he were only a citizen may annoy him very deeply in his pastoral capacity. Some kind critics never enter into particulars; they only excite suspicions, and suggestively admonish an absent-minded minister to be "more observant."

"What do you know about the man who preached for you last month?"

"Only that he is as honest a soul as ever breathed."

"Then, I may take it that this is your opinion?"

"You may. It is an opinion founded upon facts."

"No doubt you think so. He was our guest from Saturday until Monday. I assure you we observed him very carefully from the moment he entered the house until the moment he left it."

"Yes, we did," says Mrs. Bulson; "and I have no wish to go further into the subject. I suppress my feelings. It is an effort to do so, I assure you, but I will not give expression to my emotions."

"Cork 'em down," said Bulson. "It is no use troubling our esteemed pastor with painful subjects. I always say that a pastor's mind should be kept free from worries."

My anger was rising rapidly. I could have scotched both the snakes, but I thought of my ailing wife and five little children at home, and so I damped down the dangerous flame. I was, however, nearly uncontrollable when they whiningly talked of sparing my feelings. I hate to be put under obligations of that kind. To be protected by the Bulsons! To owe my very sleep to the Bulsons! For them to look at me with eyes that said, "We could break your heart, but we designedly and affectionately forbear to do so!" It was too much for me many a time. The Bulsons were elderly people who, with a comfortable income, lived in a comfortable house, and conferred dignity on the village chapel by taking two sittings in it, and "observing" in the minutest manner the unstudied actions of the rustic congregation.

"Did you observe how the Joneses have painted the outside of their house?"

"No."

"Most hideously. We always have to pass it on our way to chapel, and the violent greens and reds quite make our eyes smart. No doubt some people pass the disgusting spectacle and never see it. It would be a mercy very often to be blind."

"And deaf," I added; but the meaning was not observed; some observant people occasionally miss a point.

The Bulsons were not on familiar terms with the whole congregation. They lived within the high walls of their comfortable income. They secluded themselves within the towering palings of their dignity. To have a nod from the Bulsons was something to be remembered. It was equal to Congregational knighthood. To have tea at the Bulsons' was to graduate double first, with sevenfold honours. To differ from the Bulsons was not mere heterodoxy, it was "flat blasphemy." The Bulsons were "observant." All the people knew that the Bulsons were observant, and in mortal terror of their scrutiny the people often did things which quite destroyed their reputation with the Bulsons. The awkward things were all done unintentionally, and were the result of downright nervousness, similar to that which once made a little boy say "Yes, ma'am," to me, and then stammer out "Thank you" when I asked him to pick up my walking-stick. There is a terrorism which paralyses the most conspicuous innocence.

I was determined to have it out with the Bulsons. Flesh and blood could stand their stony observation no longer. Up to a given point Moses himself compared unfavourably with me in meekness, and Job was nowhere in patience; but beyond that point my anger outburned the mumbling and stuttering wrath of those ancients, and made a way for itself like fire in a dry haystack. I will not tarry for a daintier figure—haystack will do.

"Mr. and Mrs. Bulson," said I, "you have often advised me to be more observant."

"That is true, sir; we think it specially important that a pastor should keep his eyes wide open. We think it would help him in his sermons very much."

"In what way, Mrs. Bulson?" I inquired.

"By making them more practical," she answered. "I like practical preaching. I think a pastor should go more and more to the point. He should let the people know that his eyes are upon them, and that when they are least expecting it he is looking them through and through, and almost reading their very thoughts."

"You quite cheer me, Mrs. Bulson," said I, and turning to Mr. Bulson, I added, "Are you of the same opinion?"

"Distinctly so," he promptly replied; "if pastors were more faithful, people would be more profited. But how can pastors be faithful if they are not observant? How can they speak if they will not look? I have no wish, my dear sir, to pain your feelings, but I certainly think, and my wife also thinks, that you ought to observe your people and their ways, shall I say more punctiliously?"

"But," I added, "you would not recommend personal preaching?"

"I certainly should," Mr. Bulson replied. "Personal preaching is what that congregation requires. I distinctly urge you to be personal. Do not waste your time in generalities."

"Why not be personal?" Mrs. Bulson cheerfully interposed.

"Because the people might take offence," I said.

"Let them," the Bulsons answered; "so much the better. Faithful dealing is what they want. That would soon waken them up and bring them to their senses. If I was a minister," continued Mr. Bulson, "I would let 'em have it hot, nerves or no nerves."

"Then you would support me if I took this course?" I timidly inquired.

"Out and out," said Mr. Bulson; "and let me see a man in that congregation who would hurt a hair of your head."

"But the women?" I interrogatively suggested.

"Leave them to me," Mrs. Bulson replied. "For twenty-two years we have sat in that chapel. Many of the tradesmen are only too glad to have our custom, because they know that with us it is money down——"

"Money down," Bulson interposed.

"And they cannot afford to snap their fingers at us, and, in fact, they will be only too glad to take their cue from us."

All this could hardly fail to be satisfactory to me; it was so nobly conceived, and so magnanimously expressed. It was the very music of the Gospel sweetly brought down to the humblest channels of domestic and neighbourly life. Now came my chance. The clock struck, and Destiny stood forth.

Said I, "Mr. and Mrs. Bulson, I did not feel at liberty to move without your sanction" (there I scored visibly), "so, before entering upon my new and perilous course, I thought I would read a few sermon notes for your approval" (another bull's-eye). "May I solicit your best attention?"

"Certainly," said they both.

"My sermon is on the duty of cultivating the art of mutual observation.

"Capital!" exclaimed Mr. Bulson.

"I like it being called an art," said his wife. "It seems to give it more importance."

"And to bring it up to the times," said Mr. Bulson; "but we interrupt our pastor; pray proceed."

I then read this note: "There is a family in this church I must specially rebuke——"

"That's a stinger," said Bulson. "Pardon."

"The people to whom I refer bring discredit on the Christian name. For no service of charity are they known. The poor and the sick they never visit. Poverty has no reason to thank them. Weakness can never bless them. For old age they have no staff. For childhood they have no smile. For sorrow they have no sympathy. And for these reasons I publicly rebuke the occupants of pew No. 13, Mr. and Mrs. Bulson."

Before the following Sunday pew No. 13 was cleared of cushions and hassocks. I "observed" that fact.

NOTE XXXV.

A SUBURBAN pastorate! My friend Mr. Washington, though too robust to be unsettled by idle fancies, or seduced into self-indulgence by morbid sentiment, had sighed for such a pastorate as a happy release from the clouded and restless city in which he had ministered for twenty years. He longed to escape from the tumult and roar of crowded thoroughfares, and to enjoy the silence and contemplativeness of country life, specially of country life on *Sundays*, when the quiet of rural scenery is hushed into a deeper calm, and made to harmonise with the peaceful joy which trembles in the good man's heart. I did not wonder at his passion for the country, because he had the trained ear which quickly hears the going of God in the paths of Nature, and the penetrating eye which sees more than the mere letters which are written on the earth and sky. God had made him a deep interpreter of natural signs, and given him that enriching gift of amplification and ideal development by which poets are able to make for themselves new heavens and a new earth. He walked as a free man in the most charming haunts of Nature; he knew the voices of the birds, and was familiar with the names of many trees and plants. Like an ardent lover, he never tired of the sunny scene, and long after phlegmatic observers had exhausted its attractions, some new blush caught his watchful eyes, or some winged minstrel detained him to listen to a wordless song. That such a man had a desire for a suburban pastorate is easily imaginable, and therefore, though too reverent to force the gate which separated him from the enchanting land, Mr. Washington would gladly have assisted a higher hand than his own in opening it. To a fancy so fertile as his, there were many urgent allurements; the church on the hillside; happy families trooping from all directions to the house of the One Father; the book of revelation illustrated by the book of Nature; opportunity for self-introversion; and that refinement of spiritual education which to some men is almost impossible amid scenes which incessantly strain their activities—all these things charmed and tempted him, and at length brought him into bondage. Why not? Is it not hard for the poetic mind to dismiss the idea of an intermediate heaven—a quiet and sunny place just on the borderland, lying between the great Shadow and the greater Light? To such a mind it seems a long way to heaven from the thronged streets through which Mammon drives its sweltering votaries, and but a step from the flowery and fragrant landscape to the City of Peace. So it appeared to Matthew Washington, and he desired its realisation, though he had not lost one impulse of his generous humanity; his pitying heart had not been chilled or shrivelled. So sure was I of this, that I had a deep conviction that he would carry with him all his city memories, and that they would very probably add a thorn or two to the tempting rose which he was so eager to pluck.

In talking over his experiences in a suburban pastorate, Mr. Washington gave me a little insight into that intermediate heaven of which he had been dreaming for many a day, and as it is quite lawful to utter everything I heard about that murky and deceitful sky, I shall take the public into my confidence, and interpret the vision of a few kindred dreamers.

Mr. Washington told me that he never knew what respectability was until he saw it in the suburbs. He had been accustomed to its presence in the city, doing its business, eating its public dinner, buying its penny-worth of literature, and pleasantly mixing with all the varieties of personality and costume which go to the making up of a city crowd. This was quite familiar to him. But when he saw respectability away from its mixed and softening surroundings, when its decorations were prominently displayed, and it seemed to have written out its claims after the manner of a bill of particulars, he told me that his first sensation was that of intense coldness; he shivered as if a hand of ice had suddenly touched him, and looked round for the old kind friendships which had often made him glow with love to the whole world. When the broadcloth, the kid gloves, the jewellery, and fancy decorations are more prominent than the man; when the shell is exaggerated to a maximum, and the soul is confined to a small dark corner, it is not to be wondered at that guileless and earnest men are conscious of a change of climate which threatens their very existence. No respectability of culture, of nobleness, of benevolence, could have been too refined or too conspicuous for Matthew Washington. He would never have complained of this; he would rather have revelled and gloried in it with exceeding appreciation and thankfulness. But when respectability exhausted itself in cabinet-making, upholstery, and tailoring, he shrank from it as from an effigy which he had mistaken for a living friend.

In the suburb which Mr. Washington had chosen as the scene of his ministry, there were forests of mahogany, whole potteries of elegant ware, and nearly every house had a fancy bazaar of its own. To his unconventional mind it seemed that there must be quite a dearth of household articles in the rest of the world, and that his suburb had laid itself open to a just charge of voracious and heartless monopoly. The influence of this oppressive respectability was felt everywhere—on the road, in the house, at school, but specially and cruelly in the sanctuary. Mr. Washington was very earnest in his manner of speaking about this; it was the chief difficulty of his pastorate, and he chafed under it without any attempt to conceal his pain. He felt that he was expected to determine his sermons by the local standard of respectability; he was to preach quite as much to the mahogany as to the men; he was to think of the Turkey carpets in his exposition, and to remember the porcelain in his peroration. The idol was constantly before him, clipping the wings of his fancy, cooling the fervour of his passion, and whispering with cold breath: "Sir, look at me, and mind your manners!" To a man of Washington's make this was intolerable.

He suffered patiently for awhile, but at last the soul made a way for itself, and delivered a startling and burning testimony. The earnest witness had, of course, to reap the consequences of his temerity; several seat-holders protested, a few besought him to return to his " beautiful " sermons, and an indignant boarding-school abandoned the desecrated place for ever. Were they not right? Is it a proper thing to let loose a whirlwind upon a genteel suburb? Is it becoming or agreeable to thunder the terrors of the Lord in the hearing of rate-payers who keep three servants each, and sneer at every house which has less than four rooms on the groundfloor? Here was Mr. Washington's error—in not discriminating between the rough and worthless creatures who occupy the ungainly city, and the genteel and peerless lives that keep up the respectability of the nation. His hearers required doctrine without controversy, a lavish interspersion of rhyming couplets, and a loving assurance that, whatever became of the rest of the world, they themselves only wanted wings to become beautiful and happy as angels. This would have met their modest expectations, and secured their well-regulated applause. Instead of this, their bold and ardent pastor committed the unpardonable impertinence of metaphorically dismissing their coachman, setting fire to their mahogany, sending back their ornaments to the goldsmith, and talking to their souls the pure and revolutionary language of the gospel. This "sort of thing" would have done admirably for the people who spend their Sundays under the city cloud, but was insufferable to the human nature that kept gigs, and formed intelligent opinions upon the prevailing fashions. When human nature keeps a gig, and is sufficiently refined to discriminate between one perfume and another, it is only proper that its theology should be at least abreast of its civilisation. The Ten Commandments must subdue their tone, the Sermon on the Mount must be republished with the emendations of every alternate sentence, and the New Testament must be bound in vellum, and so arranged that it opens most easily at the precious promises. Let this be done, and the world will enter into rest. A certain Dean once asked, "Why is not an attempt made to get rid of religion?" and the bold interrogator added: "Men of the world must find it a great plague. It robs them of one day in the week, as far as outward business is concerned. It obliges them to submit to, and bear part in, a great deal of what they must feel to be atrocious humbug." If the Dean had talked the matter over with Mr. Washington, he would have learned that in some suburbs "religion" had been most genteelly entombed, and that a guard had been set lest any of its fanatical believers should attempt to take it away. Men "get rid of religion" more respectably by chloroform than by a poleaxe.

Pedantic respectability was not the only difficulty with which Mr. Washington had to contend. Alongside of it, so to speak, there stood a grim opponent, properly called *Sciolism.* Every one in the congregation seemed to know a little about some out-of-the-way subject; not one had drunk deeply at the Pierian spring, but all had tasted its delicious waters. Mr. Washington's church became like an incipient university, wanting nothing but genius and learning to make it almost moderately respectable. Every household had its hobby, and every child felt himself at liberty to put Mr. Washington through "the larger catechism with proofs." Mr. Washington thus came by some strange experiences, not without instruction to the rising ministry. One family, for example, proud of a garden thirteen feet by seven, had undertaken the study of botany, and had duly classified a guinea's worth of plants into Phanerogameæ and Cryptogameæ. Mr. Washington amiably admired the happy distribution, and thought he was coming off with flying colours, when a young lady, in her thirteenth year, utterly humbled him by asking whether the *Primula farinosa* belonged to the epiphytic or parasitic series of plants? Of course the young lady herself knew, and of course her heart struggled between pity and contempt as she looked upon her uncultivated and plebeian pastor. The famous "schoolboy" to whom Lord Macaulay so often and so flatteringly refers (unknown, however, to all the world except the omnivorous baron himself), would have answered the trifling question instantly, but the unmannerly Washington bluntly replied that he knew nothing about it. The blunder had serious consequences—the young lady could never comfortably place herself under the guidance of so ignorant a pastor. Another family had taken up the science of geology with consuming ardour. The importance of a knowledge of the structure of the earth was paramount: no man was fit to live who was not deeply versed in palæontology and mineralogy, or who did not know the difference between an argillaceous rock and a mammaliferous crag. This was the noble creed of the amateur geologists; from morning till night their inspiring talk was about fossils, specimens, and remains; every mantelpiece in the house bore some sign of felspars, hornblendes, micas, and zeolites; every child who had escaped long clothes had heard something of lamination, interstratification, and lateral variation; the proud parents, blinded by the dazzling genius of their offspring, glowed with admiring and speechless love as they heard their youngest son expatiate upon the contemporaneity of beds, and the distinction between anticlinal and synclinal curves. Poor Mr. Washington was "nowhere" on this deep subject; but he little knew the blankness and culpability of his ignorance, until a youngster, in the act of finishing a muffin, asked him if he could tell when the Jurassic period ended and the Cretaceous period began. The union of such splendid intellect with so ordinary and useful an accomplishment, while it intoxicated the parents with delight, filled the pastor with humiliating dismay. Other families had their favourite pursuits—astronomy, ethnology, history, chemistry, and even ontology in all its abysmal profundity and hazy amplitude; but the most conspicuous instance of scientific devotion was represented by a little company of three families, numbering on an average of six members each, associated for the purpose of studying music. As the improvement of congregational psalmody was one of the subordinate objects of the association, Mr. Washington was occasionally invited to attend the meetings.

My reverend friend was soon distracted by subtle discussions about dispersed harmony, dominant sevenths, and the percussion of dissonances—the last being forcibly illustrated by two eloquent ladies. Mr. Washington was, of course, delighted with the rare accomplishments of his people. He said so ; said so with hearty and generous emphasis ; said so again and again, as if he had nothing else to say ; his only wonder was that, with eighteen such brilliant singers in his comparatively small congregation, the singing was not of a higher type ; though he was bound to acknowledge, in common fairness, that since the association was founded he had heard of several of its eighteen members singing a common metre tune or two in a genteelly mumbling sort of style so perfectly scientific and refined that not a soul could hear them at the distance of more than four inches.

With all this pedantic respectability, and still more pedantic sciolism, there was, of course, a good deal that was unnatural in the spirit and habits of the people. Everything was done by rule ; everybody was secretly endeavouring to find out "the correct thing," and was determined to do it, whatever pain it might involve.

To have made a morning call before three o'clock would have degraded the caste of the oldest inhabitant; to have shaken, with anything like cordiality, the hand of the most intimate friend, would have damaged the most established reputation; and to have laughed heartily would have blighted the fairest prospects of life. It was, of course, forbidden that anything even remotely approaching surprise should be expressed; a comet was to be looked at in a most composed manner, a total eclipse of the sun was to be regarded as a commonplace affair, no notice was to be taken of so trifling an event as an earthquake; and as for shipwrecks, railway collisions, and colliery explosions, to have so much as named them would have plunged the excited newsmonger into the depths of vulgarity. This frigidity chilled Mr. Washington to the core; it chilled his sermons; and, worst of all, it chilled his prayers—those great prayers, so rich, so simple, so wise! He still had the solace of God's fair field of Nature, and he enjoyed it to the full. Early in the morning he worshipped in the waving woods, and carried forward the sweet song of birds to a higher devotion; great Nature was kind to him as a welcoming mother, opening many a hidden door to his appreciative eyes, and adding many a modest and pleasant acquaintance to the long list of his quiet friendships within the circle of the wood. As a thinker who worked rather from the spiritual centre than from the base of information, his field rambles were very helpful to him; his mind was quieted and toned by the most potent yet gentle influences, and he gathered in those lonely rambles the vivid and truthful images which gave to his writings the living charm which allures the busiest reader to their close.

Yes; we owe Matthew Washington's writings very largely to his suburbanism. When he was in the city he wrote hurriedly, merely hinting at his subjects, and never doing himself justice either as a thinker or as a writer. It was enough for him to throw out an idea in its boldest form; he almost despised artistic garniture and studious elaboration —there was the *idea*, what more could people possibly require? The consequence was that a certain class of sectarian reviewers handled him very roughly; they described his style as jagged, abrupt, almost coarse, and one reviewer so far patronised him as to say, "Mr. Washington is improving." How these words made me tingle and burn with anger! Washington himself merely smiled at them.

"Why, sir," said I, "it were better to be cursed outright than to have such dead praise!"

I cannot forget the beaming of his face as he listened to this burst of youthful enthusiasm.

"It *is* being cursed outright," he answered, "if you did but understand it; the writer of these words means to sink me with a heavy compliment."

I did not comprehend the sentiment then, but it has since come to have a clearer meaning. When Mr. Washington went into the suburbs, he pleasantly said he would "try to spin better"; it was like him to speak thus modestly. There was resolution in the words, though they were so simple and unpretending; how far they were fulfilled is known only to those who were made acquainted with the extent of his anonymous writings. I never knew any man's style undergo a greater change. Where it was short, edged, and rasping, it became flowing, persuasive, and conciliatory; and where once it would have but pointed a directing finger, it now revelled exultingly over the whole space which the writer's thought was intended to occupy. In addition to many essays upon some of the deepest problems in theology, he indulged in repeated excursions into more cheerful districts of literature, and enriched the serials of the day with many an airy dream and tuneful lyric, of whose authorship the noisy world never knew. He has listened to praises of his writings by men who never would have looked at them had they known their author, but not once did he yield to the pleasant temptation to say "*I* wrote them." He heard the verdict, and his reward for years of hard schooling was enough to satisfy him. I wanted to publish his claims as an author; but he reminded me that silence is older than speech, and that fame is better for the dead than the living. I disputed this, and flattered myself that my logic was better than his.

"Why, sir," said I, "is not fame but another name for influence? and is not every one bound to increase his influence to the farthest possible exent?"

"Possibly so," he replied; "but where an author's discovered personality might substitute aversion for applause, he might diminish his influence by attempting to augment it."

"On the other hand," I ventured to rejoin, "is it not probable that in many instances the force of prejudice might be broken, and men be brought to own their mistake and repair it?"

"Now and again such a conversion would probably occur," he admitted; "but taking a wide view of life, I believe that it is better not to risk the influence of the thought by disclosing too early the personality of the thinker; that is, if his personality be in any way likely to excite prejudice. What does a moment's popularity amount to? Let a man give his name at last, if it so please him, for death is the best answer to prejudice—a stern and terrible answer, I admit."

With these views Matthew Washington continued his literary visor to the end. Never was workman more punctually at his post than was Washington at his desk. He wrote with his heart as well as with his hand; and though I was honoured with his confidence for years, I never heard him say that any paragraph of his own fully satisfied his critical judgment. He could have improved a word, or strengthened a sentence, or burnished an image, or filed off an asperity, or done something which perhaps nobody else ever thought was in any degree necessary or desirable. My fear was that his suburbanism was making him too finical, and that for the old abrupt vigour he would substitute an insipid refinement. Happily my fear proved to be unfounded, for though the change in his style of expression was most marked, the pungency and strength of his thought escaped deterioration. His literary pursuits saved him from the melancholy which upon such a temperament as his would have been superinduced by suburbanism; he had a secret world all to himself, a world bright with stars and beautiful with many flowers, and in this world he found bread to eat of which his suburban friends did not know. Yet there was a grief darkening and depressing the good man's heart; and that grief arose from the fact that his people looked upon suburbanism as a providential exoneration from a good deal of the hard work which falls to the lot of what may be called city Christianity. The *poor*, being out of sight, were to a large extent also out of mind. Sunday-school service was unknown; tract distribution would have been an elaborate insult; open-air preaching would have brought eternal disgrace upon the whole suburb; and any other form of work would have ruined the reputation of its projector. Religion soon becomes a superstition when it ceases to be a practice; and in proportion as the second commandment is neglected, the first commandment becomes the occasion of the most corrupt selfishness—necessarily so, for reverence without benevolence destroys the universality of relationship which stimulates and strengthens the best affections of human nature. To do the simplest work is to save religion from the most aggravated misanthropy. For a man to light his last candle, and set it in the window of his cot, with the hope that its ray may catch the eager eye of the struggling mariner, who would 'give the world for light, is to please God more than to perform the most stately ceremony, as if the earth were no longer the abode of suffering humanity. True, we must not forsake the temple ; but, equally true, we must not neglect the disabled man who lies daily at its most beautiful gate. It is not denied that the picture of suburbanism now drawn is purposely exaggerated, but it is solemnly affirmed that there is enough of reality in it to demand the serious consideration of all who wish to do the work which Jesus Christ undertook throughout the whole of His ministry. No doubt the city is less pleasant than the green country ; no doubt the elegant sanctuary is more agreeable than the great meeting-house which stands in the thoroughfare of an ill-kept town ; no doubt there is a powerful charm in select society. All this is freely admitted. But when the whole case is viewed from the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot but hope that there will be a nearly complete inversion of the effects of suburbanism ; surely the happy day will come when the members of Christian families will say to one another, as regularly as the dawning of the Sabbath, "We have enjoyed during the week many of the sweet and healthful blessings of the country ; let us go to-day to visit in Christ's name and for Christ's good purposes the great city, that we may teach little children, that we may relieve and cheer the poor, and that we may support the ministers who witness for Christ under many discouragements." Such a holy resolution would add keener relish to the enjoyments of the whole week, it would gladden many cheerless lives, and give robustness to the finest graces of the soul.

NOTE XXXVI.

My Dear Mr. Stead,

I thank you very warmly for calling my attention to your notes upon Spiritual Communication, which you have published in the Christmas number of your *Review*. I am glad to be able to accept your statement without the faintest shadow of reserve as to its literal accuracy, because you have given me evidence which makes scepticism impossible. For my own part, I am not so much interested in communications from friends, relatives, old colleagues, and others as you seem to be. I acknowledge that, were such communication possible, it would be the most fascinating and absorbing occupation to trace it out in its minutest detail, and to publish it to the world as something almost equivalent to a Gospel. I cannot but feel, however, that all the endeavours which are made to realise the spiritual world are endeavours which cannot end, in themselves, with any real advantage to anybody. What does it amount to that a man has had a message from his uncle or aunt? Of what consequence is it that some ghostly presence has drawn pictures, or some spectral influence has written letters, or made lines upon a slate, or given some other token and sign of nearness and interest? Even if all this were literally true, in my judgment it amounts to nothing unless we can carry the matter very much further.

For myself, I have no difficulty in believing that all séances, all inquiries of the kind you indicate, all earnest endeavours to test the reality of the spiritual, represent so much groping after God Himself. "God is a Spirit." If men were to give themselves might and main to an inquiry concerning God, I should regard that inquiry as expressing the deepest interest in true spiritualism. Why be anxious to talk to the servant when we can get access to the Master Himself? Why talk to the sentry at the door when we can advance into the very presence-chamber of the Monarch? It seems to me that a congregation, properly regulated, ought to constitute the largest and most effective séance possible. I do not look upon a congregation merely as a public mob or a miscellaneous gathering of unrelated atoms and particles. I look upon it as a constituted medium or organisation through which the Most High can communicate present-day revelations. Of course, if congregations will not lift up their thoughts to this high level. they cannot expect to receive visions from God. If they have merely assembled promiscuously to take only the interest of curiosity in what is going on, they will deprive themselves of all the richest advantages. I should hold, therefore, that the letter which you were enabled to write by some kind of spiritual influence is not for a moment to be compared in living interest, nor for the highest purposes, as equal to what we find written in the Bible. In so far as the Bible is inspired, it is a collection of books, letters, exhortations, and criticisms direct from God. Then, why be adding postscripts? Why be concerning ourselves with inane and pointless letters simply because they are written in some sort of automatic fashion? For my own part, I put prayer as the true medium of communication with the Divine, and I have no hesitation in giving it as my testimony that prayer, when unselfish, is answered immediately and fully by God Himself.

I cannot make light of the suggestion that inspiration is a present-day fact. I believe that men may now receive direct messages from God. From my point of view, inspiration neither began with the Sacred Canon nor closed with it. It is the very life of God in the universe; it is the voice of God to the human soul. We can test it by ascertaining how far it introduces the element of moral discipline into the education of man. In the absence of such discipline—penetrating, searching, and inclusive—so-called inspiration will be mere enthusiasm or frenzy, worth nothing in itself, and incapable of doing anything in the best interests of society. Discipline is the test of revelation. The Bible not only makes great revelations of the future and of destiny, but it imposes upon the present daily tasks, daily criticism, daily responsibility. It is in this element of discipline that I find the real indication of Biblical passion and enthusiasm. Were we to live more thoroughly the Divine life, we should more deeply read the Bible itself. We do not want a new Bible; we want a new reading of the old Bible. Everything is in that deep and ever-living root. Branches and stems, twigs and blossoms, may change, but the root itself abides forever. I have no difficulty in regarding daily events as God's daily Bible published to the world. I have no faith in the piety that excludes the Divine element from journalism. John Wesley used to say that he read the journals to see how God was governing the world. I find in every day's events a new chapter of Divine providence. It would be no merely poetic fancy or conceit to regard each single day as a world in itself, revealing the whole drama of human experience in all its tragedy and comedy, in all its high lights, in all its complications, in all its agonies and joys. My religion enables me to see the spiritual element at work in all daily history. I do not shut up God within the covers of the Bible. He is at work now in every country under the sun. Of course, there appears to be a great deal of tumult and incoherence, rioting and madness; but after a due lapse of time, we shall find that the great Spirit has been working out a sublime and beneficent issue.

Is there not a possibility of turning a great idea to mean and unworthy uses? Are there not Spiritualists who make a living by their mediumship? Personally, I do not see any objection even to this use of a great spiritual faculty. Because a great inspiration can be abused, it does not follow that a great inspiration is impossible. We ought not to confine our attention to incidental degradations; we should look, rather, at the highest possibilities of the case. I have met with several Spiritualists, and have been struck by their personal earnestness. One or two of the godliest men I have ever known were simply infatuated by Spiritualism. Other men have been sober-minded, earnest, simple, and straightforward in all their supposed realisations of the highest forces. Mr. Irving Bishop was a frequent visitor at my house. He laid no claim to anything in the line of Spiritualism. He said he could not explain his own actions; in some cases he was neither afraid nor ashamed to call them tricks. A great scientific authority told him that many of his eccentric and marvellous actions were due to what he called "unconscious cerebration," by which, I suppose, he meant some unconscious action of the brain which did not fall within the ascertained lines of mental science. I have seen Mr. Irving Bishop discover hidden things, find out words that were written and sealed up in envelopes, and so far follow the thinking of a subject as to be able to give names, figures, letters, and the like as they were communicated from the brain of the subject to his own brain. All this was very striking, but what did it amount to? I have also seen Mr. Stuart Cumberland, who went very much upon the lines of Mr. Irving Bishop. Mr. Cumberland made no pretence to Spiritualism or supernaturalism. He acted like an honest and straightforward man. He frankly confessed that he could do nothing unless with the full consent and co-operation of the subject. Yet he did some very notable things. For example, he told Mr. W. S. Gilbert to think of the name which he would forge; then to think of the sum for which he would draw a cheque; and then to think of the name of the place on the map to which he would fly for refuge in the case of suspicion or detection. This was surely a very complicated task. Mr. Cumberland did it—did it immediately, and did it perfectly. No doubt this was wonderful. No doubt a rogue could make a great deal out of the exercise of such a faculty; but Mr. Stuart Cumberland simply said that he believed every mental action had its corresponding physical indications, and it was by the out-working of these indications that his hand transferred to the blackboard the impressions that were written upon the brain of the subject with whom he was co-operating. This again, I repeat, is very striking; at the same time, one cannot but ask, What is the use of it? What does it amount to? Is it not merely a very curious trick, and nothing more?

Now, it is not so with regard to the Divine Spirituality to which I would respectfully call your attention. When God acts directly, and vitally, and inspiringly upon the human soul, that great action all comes out in a pure, noble, and beneficent light. Thus we come to the real test of the efficacy of such inspiration. When inspiration, so called, ends in nothing but amazement or amusement, it is not Divine inspiration; when it ends in highmindedness, in sympathy, and in loving service to others, it is an inspiration which has come immediately from God.

Inspiration will come to different men in different ways. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They did not know what they were going to say. The prophets probably did not understand one tithe of what they uttered. They were literally and in very deed the media through whom God spoke His word to the world. When the disciples were warned that they should be brought before judgment-seats, Christ told them not to give any thought to the matter of their own defence, because He promised them that in the same hour it should be given them what they should say. Now, this power we have lost. We now preach with the words which men's wisdom teacheth. The Apostle Paul declared that he never preached in that way, but that he preached under the immediate inspiration and direction of the Spirit. It is forgotten that this is the age of the Holy Ghost. No longer is there any visible Christ, no longer is there any visible Cross. In a sense, the whole letter and the framework of original Christianity have been superseded by the action, invisible and direct, of the Spirit. Not that the old history has to be surrendered or denied, or even modified, but it now stands in a new and distinct relation to the vital progress of the world. The letter has given place to the spirit, though the letter itself still exists, and must always exist, as a help to those who are at a certain point of religious education.

I believe that preaching should be an act of inspiration. I am not now speaking of verbal exegesis. For verbal criticism arduous study will always be necessary. Nor am I making any plea for mental indolence. If any man shall say that he will take no thought what he will preach, but will stand up and let the Holy Spirit speak through him, the probability is that the man will not be accepted as an instrument through whom Heaven will speak. The preaching that I now indicate is not the result of indolence or unconcern. The preparation will only be altered; it will not be lessened. The man who is going to preach under the influence of Divine inspiration must live every day with God; he must lift up his thoughts to the very highest level, must banish everything from his environment that would vitiate his taste, narrow his sympathies, or create even an almost unconscious selfishness. He must be sanctified—that is, set apart for a special work, and must so live that God will accept him as a fit instrument for His use in revealing the Divine will.

I will ask you to pardon me for trespassing at this length upon your attention and your patience. I thank you for all you have done in this matter of Spiritualism; but I venture to submit to you that all you have done is but alphabetic and elementary, and that it ought to be no surprise to you or to any one else that communication between the worlds is possible. The Bible has been teaching this during all the centuries of its existence. It is not a truth outside the Church, but inside the Church, and upon the very centre of the altar of the Church. The Church ought not to look upon Spiritualism when the processes are honestly conducted with any but a friendly eye, because the Church well knows that every step in that direction means advancement towards the sublime fact that "God is a Spirit," and that He is willing to communicate every day with the spirits of those who wait upon Him in faith and love.

NOTE XXXVII.

When I look at the hardships of my own comparatively obscure lot, I cannot but wonder what must be the distraction and the suffering of men who are in exceptionally high public life. In limiting my remarks to my own case, I am merely guarding other men from the suspicion of having sought in me an advocate or a representative. My own postal burdens are more than enough for my spare strength. I could cope with the number of the letters better than with the variety of their contents. I say nothing of begging letters, often too full of anguish to be within the reach of sympathy, or of anonymous letters, not one word of which do I ever read; nor do I at this moment make any account of those literary cuttings sent by delicate-minded friends who are afraid lest, by the omission of one chastisement, a minister should be exalted above measure.

A stranger writes that he is engaged to read a paper before a literary society upon the "Arianism of the Fourth Century," and asks if I would mind "jotting down" a few particulars, and referring him to one or two high authorities. The same post brings an anxious inquiry respecting the right and the wrong of the practice of dancing in Christian families, with a request for reply by return of post, The next letter, running to ten sheets of closely-written note-paper, discusses the question of land, landlords, and ground-rents, and demands whether the time has not fully come when ministers should rouse themselves from their criminal lethargy and "sound the tocsin" of something or other which is beyond the range of my daily studies. The excited writer says he addresses me on "the ground of our common patriotism," and awaits my response with "the courage of despair." Whilst I keep him waiting I open the next letter, which piteously entreats me to give my views upon the subject of the eternal torment of the impenitent, and encloses a post-card for an immediate reply. Another correspondent assures me that his family might be compared to a bear-garden in consequence of divided feeling upon the subject of theatre-going, and, utterly regardless of his metaphor, he politely invites me to "step forward and pour oil on the troubled waters."

Is there any redress for public men under such circumstances? Those correspondents—and they are the majority—who do not enclose stamped and addressed envelopes are always most sensitive to neglect. Some of those thoughtful gentlemen read me severe lectures upon "the common courtesies of life," in utter forgetfulness of the fact that the lack of courtesy is on their side, and not on mine. I am not sure that editors will thank me for the suggestion I am about to make, yet it strikes me as the best possible course under the circumstances

—that such correspondents should write to the papers. I would spare the minister by taxing the editor, if it were not for the fact that some editors are themselves the greatest culprits that ministers have to guard against. Certain minor editors have invented a new outrage. Their idea is to write to public men for opinions upon the questions of the day. As, for example, What do you think of the proposal to make Mr. Gladstone the Pope of Rome? and, What do you think of the attempt to make the Archbishop of Canterbury into a Dissenting minister? and, What would become of St. Paul's Cathedral in the event of Disestablishment? I observe, however, with satisfaction that in very few cases do the most representative ministers allow themselves to be thus victimised. There are undoubtedly some subjects upon which a useful correspondence of this kind might be developed—my attention is turned in another and very different direction, and I believe many are guarding themselves against this species of complimentary felony.

May I say how I relieve my own burdens a little? First of all, as I have just said, anonymous letters are at once thrown into the fire. Secondly, letters beginning in the style of "Dear brother and fellow-sinner" are deposited in the waste-paper basket. Thirdly, all letters from strangers that do not state their business in the first sentence are laid aside until "a more convenient season." Thus I treat the first sort as contemptible, the second as misdirected, and the third as insincere. Under a less drastic policy I should not have lived to tell the tale.

NOTE XXXVIII.

SEPTEMBER once more, and at work again next Sunday! It is impossible. These autumnal months do not come, as in youth, on leaden feet as if with surly reluctance, but on strong eager wings, as if they would all come together if they could and round off life's anxieties in the very act of their deepening into despair. Whilst the plough stands in mid-furrow, I want to think a moment or two about the service and mystery of sowing and reaping. The whole work comes to so little visibly, or in any way that can be handled, yet, happily, we cannot tell what garnering may be going on in eternity. We may be reaping when we little think of it, for even in the darkness there are sounds of sickles in action—sounds as of ripe corn yielding to their keen edges, and sounds as of harvesters hastening upwards with heavy loads. The darkness lies thickly between the workman and his final joy.

As to the work, my own and others', I am often sad about it. Sometimes I feel as if it must be all wrong together, there is so much of it, and so much bustle and noise in doing it. Conventions, conferences, congresses, programmes, proposals, bases of union, and resolutions amended into more than their first emptiness—it is very awful, and may be heart-breaking to the watching Lord. Is Gospel life—the sweet life which is born of love—an affair of hard words and intricate sentences? Is it so frail a life that it must be fed with compromises, and coaxed by such parentheses in resolutions and programmes as will save its sensibilities at the expense of its robustness? It is sad—oh, so sad!—that Christian men have to explain themselves to one another so elaborately lest they should be mistaken for heretics. Christian men are now resolutely trying to speak to one another, and are engaged in stupendous efforts to abstain from mutual slaughter. It is grimly pathetic. When shall we know what the kingdom of heaven really is? It is not a form—it is not even a form of words, nor could it be, for words come and go, and stand for different things in different years; it is a parable—a deed of blood, a cry of divinest agony, a house not made with hands, a power represented by all metaphors expressing life, growth, inspiration, sympathy, and adoring love. It is the Holy Ghost. He is the factor most forgotten. What if He prefer silence to speech? What if to Him the church-meeting be a wasps' nest, and the convocation a remnant of Babel? We cannot tell. A snowfall of resolutions passed by, but the Lord was not in the snow; a storm of declamation broke on the slopes of Zion, but the Lord was not in the boisterous rant; then there came a still, small voice, a dream in sound, a tender breathing as of a yearning spirit, and that was the great power of God. That was God the Holy Ghost.

In beginning my work again, I would be filled with the Spirit. Father, make me one of Thine own prophets, a man who can read Christ's heart, and all human need, and all the things for which no words are good enough. And clothe all Thy ministers with power, and enrich them with Thy salvation. We shall then do in hot love what can never be done in cold criticism, and thus we shall receive and reveal the kingdom of brotherhood. We do not trust the Lord. We have locked up His truth in a muniment-room, and comforted our souls with the reflection that come what may we can always fall back upon the Court of Chancery. God has taken many things into His own care. We cannot put our plough into the sky, or drive our pegs into the horizon, or parcel out the sun into private leaseholds, least of all can we bring the spiritual universe within the borders of our theological tariffs. Yet we must be meddling. We must profanely eke out the infirmities of overdone omnipotence. We must invert the order of the heavens by writing ecclesiastical letters, and asking the Holy Ghost to post them. Thus do we sin against God continually.

The Spirit of God having come, what then? Then demolition, confusion, repentance, reconstruction—then a troubled Church, a defeated hell, a wind of life over the whole field of spiritual activity, almost a sight of God. We must then part with many idols and selfish trusts. Many an organisation will fall to pieces. Polish, Finish, Culture, Scholarship, as we now know them, may have to give way. Sinecure, Salary, Committee, and Resolution may have to be destroyed. Every species of ecclesiastical manufacture many have to be overhauled. Every rightness will have to complete itself by including the rightness of every other man. The sect will be a means, not an end. Fellowship will be sympathy, not bondage. A voice, not of earth, will then proclaim: "Behold, I make all things new." But if "the regular ministry" must also go? So be it. I believe in ministries which many would regard as irregular. Let all minister who can. The pulpit does not make the minister, nor does the college, nor does the gown, nor does the diploma; the minister is a direct creation of God. Let Him thrust His own labourers into His own harvest, and let us not meddle with the election and purpose of Heaven.

In humble dependence upon the Holy Ghost I would return to my work—only mine because it is first His. I go back to the city of sorrow—the vastest Aceldama known to history—helpless but for the help of God. When Christ came near the London of His day, He wept over it. What if He is even now weeping over the men who constitute His ministry? What if His tears are the shower before the bolt? It is poor work we can do at the best, yet God may use us to great ends. Even the feeblest may be the mightiest, and those who have but little hope may return with the richest trophies. Enough for me, for any man, to know that the work is God's, and that above the topstone will rise the song and shout of men who have helped in the building of His house Beautiful.

NOTE XXXIX.

SOME years ago I laid out a small sum in the purchase of the most magnificent work ever penned upon the subject to which it is devoted—nothing less than "a complete guide to the attainment of purity and elegance of style in speaking and writing." The sum expended was "two and eleven." How far the investment was such as to tempt you to follow my example you shall presently see. Please to remember that the book in question is not merely a guide, but a *complete* guide; and not a complete guide to rudimentary writing, but to the attainment of *purity and elegance of style.* What is said on the title-page is repeated on page 33—"our treatise being designed for the advanced student," etc. Notwithstanding this high design, the condescending author gives on his sixteenth page "Preliminary Hints to Juvenile Readers," the originality and value of which do not admit of two opinions. Here they are:

"Be careful to pronounce each word deliberately, with a clear and distinct utterance of syllable, and with due attention to the vowels, diphthongs, and final consonants. Read as if conversing in polite society, not as a task, not thinking of your voice and how you impress your listeners, but, as far as you can, forgetting yourself, and entering into the feelings and sentiments of the author; and a caution to youthful readers may here not be ill-timed, namely, that they especially guard against an over-serious and formal tone and manner. The object of reading is to give pleasure, while imparting information; therefore the voice, as well as the expression of the countenance, should indicate cheerfulness, making it apparent that the reader takes an interest in the subject, and is gratified by the exercise. There is a natural charm in a lively and unaffected tone; and, to conclude, we recommend the old-fashioned couplet as a very good rule for beginners, namely,

'Learn to speak slow; all other graces
Will follow in their proper places.'

"A variety in exercises gives mastery, and for this it is advisable to practise alternately the different styles of composition, from the light and humorous, to the more grave and dignified."

The comprehensive advice to be careful about vowels and diphthongs, yet not to think of the voice; to forget yourself, and yet to let the countenance indicate cheerfulness; not to think of the voice, and yet to aim at a lively and unaffected tone, is most charming, enabling the author to come in at the front-door and go out at the back, and to say contradictory things in such a manner as to be bound to neither of them. The youthful reader is not to think of how he impresses his listeners, yet he is to show that he is gratified by the exercise;

he is to be indifferent to his hearers, and yet to remember that his object is to give them pleasure, and impart to them information. They must be *very* juvenile readers for whom such lucid hints are designed. You will be pleased to observe that the countenance is to indicate cheerfulness, as a proof that the reader takes an interest in the subject, whether the subject be "light and humorous" or "the more grave and dignified"; the great object with our pleasant author is to be *cheerful*, in whatever direction the rhetorical wind may blow.

So much for juvenile readers. Coming to "advanced students," the author "doubts whether the strict formality of methodical systems may not often prove rather a hindrance than a help to minds of a superior cast." Keeping his eye upon "minds of a superior cast," the author sublimely says: "Had the early genius of Shakespeare been thus cramped and rigidly tied down to precise modes and details of study, we much doubt whether his imagination would have expanded with the noble freedom, and bold and graphic originality, which constitute the great charm of his dramatic compositions. We admit that, so trained, he might have been eminently shrewd and clever, but he would not have been Shakespeare as he has come down to us, and as we delight to know him." This is, of course, a most satisfactory explanation of Shakespeare. We now see clearly all about him. Avoid precise modes and details of study, and you will probably be a Shakespeare; keep clear of "hints to juvenile readers," or you will never write "Hamlet." The judicial mind of the author admits that had Shakespeare read such hints, and been foolish enough to take them seriously to heart, he would have been a tolerably shrewd man on the whole—nay, more, "eminently shrewd and clever," which is a poor encouragement to the public to buy our author's "complete guide." How any man can have brought himself to imagine that Shakespeare could have been "cramped and rigidly tied down to precise modes and details of study" is not to be satisfactorily accounted for, except on the principle that he himself was "rigidly tied down" in his youth, and has never been able to shake off his bonds.

Having thus explained the majesty of Shakespeare, the author adds with wonderful simplicity: "We have therefore purposely omitted much of the introductory matter commonly found in school treatises," etc. This is one of the collateral blessings which Shakespeare has conferred upon the world. Because Shakespeare *might* have been spoiled by modes and details, our author shrinks from the possibility of nipping some young Shakespeare in the bud, and *therefore* avoids "precise modes and details of study." This was very daring on the part of the author, yet he recovered himself by the aid of a great name. "Nor," says he, "are we without support in this our view. It was the advice of Dr. Johnson," etc., clearly showing how impossible it is even for the strongest minds to proceed far in original thinking without coming upon unexpected and illustrious companionship. Dr. Johnson advised a young man to give his days and nights to Addison, and our author adds this important remark: "We hold the counsel advisable, for his writings exhibit a faultless style and classic purity, while breathing a cheerful spirit, enlivened with a rich vein of humour and a playful, but harmless, satire, and as a moral essayist he has rarely been excelled." After this, no one will be at liberty to question the "advisableness" of Dr. Johnson's advice. In the first instance Dr. Johnson supports our author's opinion, and in the next our author supports Dr. Johnson's opinion, and thus the whole question is settled. Still, remembering that "by some this celebrated essayist is regarded as out of date," the author judiciously adds: "We deem it well, then, to begin with Addison, but by no means to end with him." Certainly not! *Begin* with an author of "faultless style and classic purity," but "by no means *end* with him." Give your days and nights to Addison, and the remainder of your time to somebody else!

One brief division of this "complete guide" is entitled "The Suggestive Faculty," and in giving "Hints for its Exercise," the author says: "In order to be fluent in speech, we must be fertile in thought; for words being but the signs of our ideas, to have a copious command of the former we must multiply the latter. Whatever, therefore, sets our thoughts actively at work, will serve our turn, and claims our first attention. For this formal rules are not needful; a single suggestion may suffice. We we will then at once commence." Prepare yourself, my friend, for one of the most pathetic illustrations ever addressed to your heart, and please to remember that it forms part of a book intended for "advanced students"—not for tyros, but for men of capacity and strength. The author's object is to teach his advanced students how to "multiply ideas," and how admirably the illustration is fitted to serve this useful purpose you will see without the aid of a commentator: "You have received, we will suppose, two invitations, each being to spend a month, one with friends in town, the other in the country; you must choose between them, and perhaps are puzzled in so doing. Ere you decide, you will think and turn over in your mind the pleasure and advantage you may expect from either. On the one hand the country tempts you with its freshness and beauty, its rural scenes, its walks and rides and healthful recreations; on the other hand, the town attracts with its gaieties, its social pleasures, and diversified entertainments—in either case not omitting the companionship you may prefer and the society you will enter into. Here is no lack of matter for thinking, if you would choose discreetly; and it will be helpful to note down separately the pros and cons, and then weigh and consider. We have merely thrown out the hint for the youthful composer."

"Here is no lack of matter for thinking!" You will observe that the town attracts you *with* its gaieties; you will also observe that you are not only to *think*, but to *turn over in your mind*, and the difficult part of your work is to think and turn over "the pleasure and advantage" which exist only in expectation, and therefore don't exist at all. It is very prettily said that the *country* tempts you with its *rural* scenes. Observe the intellectual process through which you have to pass before going out for a month's holiday: "think—turn over in your mind—note down separately—then weigh and consider"—*that's all!* Why, you could not do more if you had to choose between life and death! I am afraid that if anything could have enfeebled the wings of Shakespeare, this process of "thinking" would have succeeded in doing so. If you should ever avail yourself of this absurd advice, pray don't tell the friend whose hospitality you accept that you have made your way to his house through the briers of such sharp logic, and especially keep the secret from his wife, or she will not ask you whether you will take tea or coffee, for fear you should retire for an hour to "note down separately the pros and cons." It is, however, a great relief to find our author saying, "We have merely thrown out the hint for the youthful composer." If the youthful composer will do the same thing, the hint will be treated exactly as it deserves. No, no; we must have something better than this, worse is impossible. Why, this is infinitely better: a minister, whose command of words was positively alarming, was asked by what method he had acquired such amazing fluency, and he frankly owned it was the result of practice. Said he, "When I go out to walk, I say to my stick, 'Long stick, hard stick, strong stick, smooth stick, thick stick, light stick, nice stick.'" Whereupon his waggish listener added, "*Dry* stick," and left him.

You are not to be deterred from the practice recommended by our author by its difficulty, because "such a process constitutes the element of solid improvement," and, besides this, "the task becomes easier with practice: one thought begets another, till at length we master the difficulty and become conscious of our power. We then begin to take a pleasure in duly ordering our ideas, and in giving a becoming expression to them." This word of encouragement is needed, considering the painfulness of the task appointed by the exacting author. Some of us have great difficulty in "commanding our thoughts"; judge therefore of my delight in coming upon this luminous passage:

"It is most desirable to acquire betimes a habit of fixing the attention and concentrating the thoughts, which are ever prone to wander, especially with the unpractised; a watchful guard is therefore requisite to counteract this propensity; and it is no less needful to be able to control our ideas than to have formed them aright. In the choice of words, also, to give a judicious expression to our sentiments, due care and discretion are indispensable."

That settles the question, by putting you up to the art and mystery of mental concentration. You see now exactly how it is, don't you? Appoint a watchful guard, and give due expression to your sentiments—that's all, nothing easier, my dear sir, if you know how, which it is not the business of the "*complete*" guide to tell, especially for the trifling sum of two and eleven-pence. Still, our author must have felt that in putting the case in this clear manner he had made a considerable contribution to that form of authorship which, as George Eliot says, "is called suggestion, and consists in telling another man that he might do a great deal with a given subject by bringing a sufficient amount of knowledge, reasoning, and wit to bear upon it."

You will admit, I am sure, the importance of "variety in forms of expression"; on this subject our author is conspicuously great, as you will see by the following:

"This is effected by changing the position of the component parts of a paragraph, or compound sentence, without altering the words.

"EXAMPLE.

(1) When a good man dies he leaves all his bad behind, and carries all his good with him. When a sinner dies he leaves all his good, and carries all his bad.
(2) When a good man dies he carries all his good, etc.
(3) A good man when he dies leaves, etc.
(4) A good man when he dies carries, etc.

(5) When he dies, a good man, etc.
(6) A sinner when he dies—When a sinner dies, etc.
N. B.—This sentence admits of twelve variations."

Now, sir, no more talk of want of variety in preaching! By a skilful use of this novel permutation, one sermon will last you a lifetime. When I reflect on this, it is impossible to begrudge the two and eleven-pence for so complete a guide. Query: If one sentence admits of twelve variations, of how many variations will two sermons admit? Then the *text* may be varied: begin one inch from the beginning, then begin in the middle, then read it backwards, and then try it from the beginning. If the order of words may be varied, why may not the *emphasis* of the words be varied too? See how rich a field is opened by this simple plan! Take the text, "Go thou and do likewise," and the results are truly wonderful. Thus

Go thou and do likewise; that is, don't do it *here*, but go out and do it.
Go *thou* and do likewise; don't work by deputy, do your own work.
Go thou *and* do likewise; it is not enough to go, you must also do.
Go thou and *do* likewise; don't merely think or approve, but *act*.
Go thou and do *likewise;* don't be original; copy and reflect, but don't originate.
N. B.—This emphasis is adapted to all subjects and occasions.

The native delicacy of the author's taste is strikingly shown in his remarks upon "Qualified or Softened Expression." Some of us have an unfeeling way of calling a spade a spade, and a shameful habit of calling a liar a liar. To all this rudeness there may now be a happy end. Speaking upon "Qualified or Softened Expression," the author says: "This serves to mitigate the severity of rude and harsh-sounding words, by avoiding all such as are highly offensive. Thus, instead of branding the individual with the odious epithet of liar, we may accuse him of misrepresentation. Instead of the stigma sluggard or idler, we say, deficient in energy, the reverse of diligent, prone to inaction. Insufferable pride will be exaggerated self-esteem; for madness, alienation of mind; and instead of brutal folly, a lamentable want of prudence."

This rule would considerably change (not improve) the method of putting things in some parts of the New Testament. For example, "If any man say he love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar," would be, he is guilty of misrepresentation—a much gentler method of dealing with the case. Even Solomon, wisest of men, might be amended: when he says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard," he should be read as saying, "Go to the ant, thou who art prone to inaction!" When Jesus Christ calls Herod a "fox," He should be understood as calling him "that animal of the genus *Canis*, with a straight tail, yellowish hair, and erect ears"—decidedly more polite, and more considerate of human feeling.

Remember that no preacher was ever made by rules. You may have a bag full of excellent tools, but if your fingers be unskilled, your instruments are of little use. Does the *spade* make the gardener? Does the *easel* make the painter? A man may read guide-books and finger-posts all the days of his life, and yet never take a walk; or he may be profound in Bradshaw, and yet never enter a train. It is possible, too, to be a critic without being an artist, and to be able to find fault without being able to do better. Many of your hearers will complain of your sermons who could not write a sermon if they were to be rewarded with heaven for doing so. Don't upbraid them for their inability. Fault-finding is a distinct and special talent. What would you have thought if, when you told your shoemaker that your shoes didn't fit, he had challenged you to make a better pair? Remember this, and be humble!

NOTE XL.

It has been one of my misfortunes in life that people have never forgotten anything I ever said or did since I was three years old. The other day this misfortune took an awkward turn when a lady asked me if I had any photographs representing myself at that early period, and what my mother thought of me at that tender age. Was I very precocious? Did I strike out and kick a good deal? Were other children afraid of me? The misfortune would not be so severe if people did not expect me to remember as clearly as they do. When I say "No," they assume a look which means, You fraud! You base pretender! How dare you affect to forget!

Said one friend, "Do you remember putting your arms round a man and telling him to look up?"

"No, sir."

"You did, and you won that man's heart."

I am so hardened that I can stand a good many things, but one of the things I cannot stand is to hear some persons try to quote what I have said. Thus:

"I was so much profited by what you said about the Corinthian pillar and the snake in the grass."

Now these are two exciting subjects about which I know nothing. I have as a matter of fact never considered them. But what could I do? The man was profited. Why should I mar his edification when it harmed nobody?

It is another misfortune of mine, as I told you before, to know a man who always finishes my sentences for me. He is a very friendly policeman. When I go out of town I put my house in the care of the police, so I wished to recognise their attentiveness, and said:

"When we are on our holidays it is a great satisfaction to us to know that our house is in the care——"

I paused.

He added, "Of One above."

I only meet this helpful friend occasionally, but never without his endeavouring to assist me.

When I next saw him I wished to make some recognition, in a pecuniary form, of the services of the police, so I slowly said:

"I have lately been considering——"

I paused.

He added, "Your latter end."

Now, how is it possible for me to give that man anything? It would be like giving something to a collection.

A third misfortune of mine is to encounter people who have no idea whatever of the meaning of words, yet they will sometimes use very long ones. What a lady meant I cannot tell, but these are her very words:

"When I write your name I always add 'incorrigible—one in a million.'"

Now, in the name of all inferior animals and things without life, what does this faithful woman mean?

In an omnibus one day I was seated opposite a young woman who gave her baby so much sponge-cake that the little creature coughed itself black in the face. A man sitting next to me had the courage to remonstrate; the man, I may add, was that most solemn of all creatures, a Scotchman slightly the worse for tippling.

"Woman," said he gravely, "what you have now done might have been fatal—speaking grammatically, I say it might have been fatal."

On the other hand, it is my good fortune now and then to meet a really sensible man. Here is a case. A friend came to my private room in the City, and said in a tender Welsh tone:

"I have called to see if you can——"

"I cannot," said I.

"Can't you?" he sweetly inquired.

"No," I added.

"Thank you," said he; and the interview was at an end.

I wonder if he was going to ask me to accept a hundred pounds?

NOTE XLI.

THOMAS is my occasional gardener. He is full of notions. Not what I want, but what he wants, is the rule in my garden, which is only about half an acre in size when all is said and done. From Thomas's talk, you would think it was a large estate enclosed in a ring fence, and that only himself could handle the immense concern. Perhaps it is his liver. I cannot say positively. But whatever it is, it so works upon Thomas as to keep him in a constant state of alarm and apprehension. For hearing all sorts of awful things Thomas is as unlucky as an evening newspaper. Thomas never smiles. Thomas seldom speaks except when he has something very awe-inspiring to communicate, and then his whisper is worth a fortune. When I approach Thomas in what I mean to be a cheerful and exhilarating manner, his very look chills me to the marrow. He is sure to have heard something quite dreadful which he has read in a comic newspaper. For what earthly reason I cannot make out, it is so unlike what you would expect, Thomas takes in a funny paper every week, and gets out of it the most astounding information. He must read the paper upside down. Perhaps, I say, it is his liver. What else can it be that leads Thomas to suppose that the advertisements are the paper, and the literary contents are the mere filling up?

Thomas has his own way of doing everything, and no man can turn him from it.

The other day, it may be two years since, I meant to be very rollicking and mirth-provoking, so I asked the following funny question:

"Thomas," said I, "how are things going on?"

I thought he would see the irresistible fun of the inquiry. He failed.

"O lor, sir!" said he, his face rigid and pale, "I see by the paper that many crowned heads are trembling in their shoes."

"Thomas," said I, the last spark of humour dying in my frivolous breast, "how do you account for that?"

Thomas took a spell at deep digging and simply said nothing. He literally forgot that I was standing there.

"There be a-many things going on," said he at length, "which if they was not a-pushing about one would say that something or other was a-standing upside down."

"Thomas," said I, "you never spoke a truer word."

"In particular in that there America," said Thomas, "which I never did think a very safe place to live in, not but that it's big enough."

"But Thomas," said I, "what on earth are you talking about? I don't see how your words hang together."

"Why, sir," he replied, "they have elevators there—machines that go up and down places like chimneys—to save running upstairs."

"Well, what of it?"

"A good deal, sir. I see the other day, in that there paper o' mine, that a man had something the matter with him, and the chemist he tell the man ——Oh, lor! it is too awful!"

"What, Thomas?"

"Why, sir, that man had something in him which went up and down, and up and down, all day long, and the chemist and druggist tell the man that he knew exactly what was the matter with him."

"And what was the matter, Thomas?"

"Well, sir, you will never guess, not if you was to stand there till the Judgment Day."

"Then tell me."

"As true as true, sir, the druggist told the man that he had swallowed the elevator, and the man was so compounded and fuzzled-like as he couldn't deny it. No America for me, if you please," said Thomas, snipping off a dead twig with a jack-knife.

"Thomas," said I, "the world may or may not be round, but it is undoubtedly queer."

"Ay," said Thomas, drawing a long sigh and looking the very picture of misery, "and it will be queerer still, and a good deal queerer, if they go on making many more pills and plasters."

"Pills?"

"Yes. I don't say it is not. I won't lie about it. I see by the paper there was a earthquake somewhere—somewhere a long, long way from here, and a man said he knew a pill as could cure it. I read that, sir, with my own eyes. I got my little girl, sir, to read it over again, and she burst into tears, and cried like a rainy day till I promised her a doll."

"Then she quieted down, did she?"

"She did, sir. She dried up wonderful."

"Thomas," said I, "have you a vote for a Member of Parliament?"

"In course I have, sir, which is no more nor right, as I often say, says I. Life would not be worth living, says I, if reading men could not vote blue or yellow, and please themselves which."

THE COURSE I TOOK.

I don't say it was a safe course, or a course that any other man should take. I simply say that I took it. The man I mean—of course you have heard of him, so I need not tell you his name—had an odd way of finishing my sentences for me, and of telling me with great feeling that he knew what I meant, and then putting it into words from which I shrank in awful fright. "I know what you mean," said he; "you mean that the one is not so beastly vulgar as the other." Now, nothing was further from my meaning, but have I hurt his feelings by telling him so? "I know what you mean," said he; "you mean that, of all the confounded nuisances in this blessed world——" No; not that—as far from that as possible. I should say, speaking roundly and off-handedly, about two million miles from that. But as he saw my meaning so clearly, it seemed cruel to mar his innocent gaiety, and to turn my back on a man who thought he was doing me a good turn. He so far saw my meaning that he could break in upon a sentence and close it for me in the most startling manner. In my calmer moments I speak very slowly, and thus I afford many openings for ardent minds. My quieter style tempts quick-speaking persons to enrich my halting talk with many parentheses. They cannot resist the tiny demon which they call their "genius."

Take a specimen of what I mean, not forgetting how painfully slow is my speech:

"I saw the other day [a man on two donkeys] a forlorn-looking sailor [wondering what land was made for], who asked me for an odd copper [tobacco again], and when I asked him how he spent his Sundays [he looked forlorner still], he said that his widowed mother and a very infirm but respectable uncle [both in the workhouse], though so tall as to be continually [in the way of the swallows] had always advised him [to despise inconvenient questions], and when I remonstrated——"

"I know what you mean," said my friend; "you mean that when you fluffed up to him like an excited turkey——"

"No, my friend," said I—"far from it. I let turkeys do their own business. I never fluff. I do not go to the poultry-yard for my manners. But as your mind is so keen—in fact, as your precision so strongly resembles omniscience—I may tell you that though the prophet Balaam once held a brief interview with a donkey, I am not aware that the donkey was so complete an ass as to suppose that he knew what the prophet meant."

That is the course I took. A minister is sometimes driven to very painful alternatives, and my only wonder is that, on the whole, he can adopt them with so unaffected a resignation.

The course I took in another case may appeal to the sympathy of many brethren. It was the case of a baby. I call her a baby, for she was only four and a half within a year or two. But so precocious! Her information turned me white. I am sure nobody can believe a word I am going to say. She asked me when we were alone if I had seen the cat, and, obeying my conscience, I answered, "No." "If you give him a strawberry he will almost sing 'God save the Queen.'"

"Have you read about the Roosians?" she continued.

"Yes."

"And about the resurrections?"

That such big words should come out of so small a mouth simply stupefied me.

"Have you any brothers?"

"Jack. But Jack is a dunce."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake!" I rashly exclaimed, "do fetch him."

"He is dirty," she said.

"The dirtier the better," I assured her. "Run," said I, "and bring Jack at once. I long for him."

"He has been throwing coals at the dog all day."

"Bless his heart!" said I; "oh, kiss him for me, and bring in the dog too."

"The dog knows more than Jack knows."

"Then, keep the dog out," I answered. "Oh, kennel the beast! Tie him up with ropes. Fetch Jack."

"Jack has a naughty prayer," said she. "He says, 'O God, I thank you for making nice snails, and I thank you for giving me strength to squash them.'"

Jack came. Jack was coaly in appearance. He might have brought the coals up from the pit. He was sooted o'er with the dark grim of thoughtlessness. But I loved him. He knew nothing about Roosians and resurrections.

"Jack," said I, "are you really a dunce?"

"I can throw a stone furder nor Billy Townshend," was his incoherent reply.

"Where do you throw stones, Jack?"

"At Jolly's hen-pen."

"Jack," said I, "here's my hand. I love you. I could scream about you. I could strike a medal in your honour. Oh, Jack, let me hug you, and kiss you, and bless you! Jack, you are a coaly, sooty hero!"

That was the course I took. Jack liked me. He said he would not mind coming to chapel if I could "make it shorter."

My doctor is the man who forces me to a course which might be painful if I could really believe him. He is so kind and so sympathetic that he tells lies. At least, I fear he does, and I feel it the more because he tells them for my sake. He wants to comfort me. Thus:

"Doctor, what can I do for a pain in the head?"

"I know it well," he would answer; "I once had that same pain seventeen weeks, and never closed my eyes during the whole time."

"Doctor," another time, "I have such a pain in my left eye."

"Nothing to what I have had," said he; "I had a pain in both eyes for four months, and at one time my friends were afraid I should lose my reason."

Whatever disease I had the doctor had had, only he had suffered fifteen times more than I did, and fifteen times longer. At length I invented a case.

"Doctor," said I, "I am afraid hydrophobia may be coming on."

"When I had it," said he, "my friends put me into a strait-waistcoat and mopped my head with soapsuds five times a day, and, strange as it may appear, and indeed incredible, the only thing that did me good was almonds and raisins."

What was I to do? What course was I to take? How could I tell him that he fibbed on a gigantic scale? I wished to take a judicious course, so I started my complaint from the spiritual side.

"Doctor," said I, "what is a man to do who has broken all the commandments?"

"When I broke them——" said he.

"*You*, doctor?"

"I mean," he said, "when I was on the point of breaking some of them——"

"Oh, which," said I—"do say which?"

"I mean," he said, "I mean, I suppose, I cannot but feel, I——"

Said I: "Doctor, that's just my case. You have said what I have long meant to say as soon as I could put my thoughts into shape."

I think he saw it.

NOTE XLII.

If we believe the New Testament, we believe that men were once "made whole" without medicine or doctor. If this was a fact in New Testament times, why may it not become a fact in the present day? If it is a fact, it is the most beneficent fact in history, and, being such, it ought, if possible, to be recalled and re-established. To grasp the question wisely and thoroughly, we must go back to Christ's own day and think with Him. We have no concern with knaveries, quackeries, empiricisms, or fraud and pretence of any kind; all these must be banished from the mind, or they will create prejudices which truth itself cannot penetrate. First of all, let us strive after simplicity of mind; that is essential to progress. Did Christ heal men? Yes, He did. Did Christ's Apostles heal men? Yes, they did. Was the healing mechanical, surgical, medicinal? No, it was not. Was the healing spiritual, sympathetic, mental? Yes, it was. Is Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Yes, He is. Does Christ still live and work and reign? Yes, He does. That settles the case. Suffering is the same, Christ is the same, love is the same. Then what is wanting? Just what was wanting in Christ's own day. Dost thou believe? Believest thou that I am able to do this thing? All things are possible to him that believeth. He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. We must simply and heartily adopt the belief—a most rational belief it is—that the things which are impossible with men are possible with God. That is all. The belief must not be mere assent; it must be the ruling and ever-active principle of the life. Not to doubt is not belief. Mental indifference is not belief. Belief is by-life. We must, however, take care that belief is maintained at its proper level. This is vital. What is the proper level of belief! It is not that it is best to be cured; it is that God knows best whether it shall be life or death, and to say, "Thy will be done." We are, of course, naturally inclined to think that it is best for us to be cured, whereas we ought to have no opinion about the case at all, but to leave it absolutely in the hands of God. The curing of disease is a very paltry matter; to cure the disease of distrust of God is the supreme miracle. That is health. The healed heart will then talk thus: "Lord, my body is diseased, my suffering is great; thou knowest whether it is better for me to die than to live. I want to be well. I enjoy life. I want to live for the children's sake, for the work's sake, for my own sake. But I am ignorant, I am small-minded, I am selfish. Make Thy will my will, and evermore may Thy will be done." That is faith at its highest level, and, indeed, on its only level, for on any other line it is only disguised self-consideration.

That there is a power which is not dependent on our desire or our will is clearly shown in the New Testament as well as in the Old. Mountains could be removed, storms could be silenced, bread could be multiplied. I do not, however, know any case in which a man was healed against his will. There are certainly cases in which the faith was not in the sufferer, but in his father or friends, as, for example, in the case of demoniacal possession. But in such case faith was impossible, and, being impossible, was not indispensable, for Christ magnified Himself in the infirmity of the sufferer.

What we, then, have to strive for is the higher faith of acquiescence in the Divine will, not caring whether it is by life or by death that we have to magnify God's grace. That believing men are not healed, but are actually plunged into deeper suffering is no argument against the potency of faith. It is in the well-borne contradiction of our desires that we carry our faith to its highest point. The question should never be dependent on the lower will, the minor desire, but always on God's will, which can never be cruel and never be mistaken. Then, at our weakest we may be at our strongest, and in dying we may abolish death. The miracles of faith have often been regarded as miscarriages, because we have judged them in one way only, and that way the mean way of our own will. The miracle of love may have eclipsed the miracle of power, and in another world we may see that our disappointment was our greatest blessing.

The question then arises, Are we to force our faith upon God, and to judge Him by our ignorance? Am I to say, "Lord, I am blind or maimed, and I ask Thee to heal me, for with my whole heart I believe Thou art able to do this"? I may say this, but I must not conclude there. I must repeat the Lord's prayer: "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done." In such a case the bodily eyes may remain blind, but the eyes of the soul will enjoy strong, clear vision. That is the true faith-healing, and the true healing-faith. What is faith but the superiority of the spiritual over the material? I have not the shadow of a doubt that the material will decrease and the spiritual will increase. The ponderous locomotive will be superseded. We shall have telegraphy without the wire. We shall ring up souls as we now ring up the ears of the body. We shall know that we are wanted at the telephone, and go to it and listen for a message. This is the spirit of the new time, as it was the spirit of the old time. We are moving towards the God-power—God is a Spirit. Mind created all things, why should not Mind rule them? With barrow and spade a day-labourer can carry the mountain into the sea. Why cannot a faith-inspired mind order it out of the way and scatter it on the waves? In the end it will be so, but not until universal mind is in universal harmony, for otherwise faith would be the creator of disorder, and the enemy of peace. We shall then see, not the faith of one man, but the consolidated faith of all men.

NOTE XLIII.

I WANT to tell you about a boy that had a garden, which was not like any other garden you ever saw or ever heard about. The boy himself never saw the garden. Only think of that, now! A boy had a garden and never saw it! A boy sowed seed in his garden, yet never set his foot in it! There were twenty gates into the garden, and the boy watched every one of them, for fear the plants and the flowers should be stolen. But that is not all. The funniest thing is that wherever the boy went he carried the garden along with him. Wherever the boy went, the garden went; and whenever the boy had a moment to spare he put something into the garden.

Now, would you like to hear about this boy and his garden? If you would like me to tell you all I know about it, hold up your right hand as high as ever you can. Now hold up the left hand in the same way. Now hold up both hands together just as high as ever you can reach. Very well; now I see you are all awake, so I can begin.

The boy's name was Janey. But wait a moment. I must be wrong. Is Janey a boy's name? Tell me. (Children answer.) Then I will tell you what it must have been. It must have been Jamie. That's it. Now what does Jamie stand for? (Children answer, *James.*) Yes; that is it. Who can spell James? (Let them try.) But who can spell garden? (Let them try.) Very good. Now we come to Jamie and his garden. Jamie had a spade, a rake, a hoe, and a dibble. None of you can spell dibble, can you? (Let them try.) But who can spell hoe? That will puzzle you. (Try.) There were many strange things that Jamie put in the garden. One was a little, hard, black seed, and when the flower came up Jamie called it "good resolution." That is a long word. How many syllables are there in it? (Try.) Who can spell it? (Try.) Now, what is a resolution? You don't know. Well, let me tell you. When a boy makes up his mind to get all his lessons quite ready for school, he makes a resolution, and when he keeps his word he is said to carry out his resolution. Jamie had six good resolutions all in a row. Shall I tell you their names? If you would like me to tell you their names, lift up your right hand. (Go through same process as before.) Thank you. (1) To keep all his clothes clean; (2) To get all his lessons off; (3) To get out of bed the very moment he was called; (4) Never to get into a bad temper; (5) Never to cheat when he was playing; (6) Always to say "if you please" when he wanted anything. Now, can you tell me any one of Jamie's six resolutions? (Try.) A very strange thing once happened in the garden belonging to—— What did I say the boy's name was? (Answer.) Yes; Jamie. One of the gates opened as if by itself, and Jamie went to see what was the matter, and behind the gate there was a little fellow almost hidden in the hedge, and his name was Tommy Play. Tommy never did any work; he always wanted to play with somebody, and he would have played even on Sunday if his mother had not kept her eye on him. Tommy put up his finger, as if he wanted Jamie to go to him; but Jamie said, No, he could not go because he was busy in the garden. What do you think Tommy did? He offered to give Jamie two marbles if he would go and play. Then he said he would lend Jamie his top to spin all the afternoon if he would play: but Jamie said "No," and just then Tommy's mother came along with a leather strap, and gave Tommy such a stroke upon the arm that he began to cry. And what do you think he did then? Would you like me to tell you? If you would like me to tell you, hold up your right hand. (Same exercise as before.) Well, Tommy told his mother that it was all Jamie's fault; that Jamie came out of the garden and wanted him to play. Now what do you call that? It was a LIE! It would be better for a boy to have his right hand cut off than to tell a lie. A lie is a very awful thing! It is so cowardly, so mean, so selfish. The boy who tells lies never comes to any good. But I want to tell you more about Jamie, so we will let Tommy's mother take him home and tell him what she thinks of him.

Jamie went back to his work in the garden, and what do you think poor little Jamie did? Try to guess. (Give them a little time.) I will tell you. Poor little Jamie forgot to shut the garden gate. He never thought of it. He just ran away, as if Tommy's mother was going to beat him, too. It was a pity Jamie did not shut the gate, and I will tell you why. A dog got in at the open gate and ran all over the garden, and made such a mess of the flower-beds. It was not a bad dog; it did everything in play; but that did not hinder it from doing a great deal of mischief, and giving Jamie a great deal of trouble. People should always shut gates. It is always a wise thing to lock a gate, because dogs are going about, or robbers, or some sort of bad people. If ever you open a gate be sure to shut it again. If Jamie had shut the gate, the dog could not have got in. Poor Jamie was very sorry when he saw what the dog had done. But Jamie was not the boy to sit down and cry about things. Jamie buckled to like a good lad, and soon had the garden put right again.

Now, shall I tell you the name of Jamie's garden? (Answer.) Would you really like to know it? (Answer.) If you would really like to know the name of Jamie's garden, walk twice round the room, then sit down just where you are now. (Let this be done.) That's good. Now I am sure you would like to know. Very well, then, Jamie's garden was Jamie's *heart*. Every one has that very same kind of garden, and every one may sow seed in his heart that will come up in beautiful flowers, or perhaps in beautiful fruit. Some children sow bad seed in their hearts, then all sorts of bad things spring up, and it is often very hard to pull them up by the root. It is no use pulling the leaves or cutting the twigs off. You do no good until you have got down to the root, and torn it every bit right out of the ground. Now, I leave you to think about all this. What was the boy's name? (Answers by the children.) What had he got? What did he call the flower that came up? How many flowers of that name were all in a row? Can you tell me any of their names? Who opened the gate? What did he tell his mother? What did Jamie forget to do? What happened then? What was the name of Jamie's garden? Thank you. That will do for the present.

NOTE XLIV.

ALTHOUGH it is generally safer to prophesy after an event than before it, life would become very insipid and disagreeable if we could not sometimes take a canter in the dark. But, truth to tell, I do not see much darkness upon the main outlines of the twentieth century, a century of silent, but profound and historic, revolutions and developments.

PREACHING.

Preachers there will always be, and possibly great preachers, but, taken broadly, there will be no pulpit in the twentieth century. Preaching is the supreme impertinence, as between man and man, unless the preacher be divinely inspired and qualified. Given an inspired message and an inspired messenger, and the pulpit is safe. Is it possible that England can require all the preaching, and the kind of preaching, that is done in it every week? Does England require the preaching of thirty thousand able-bodied men every Sunday—and twice every Sunday—in the year? Or, if all the preaching is required, is it required in the same place? The Master said, "Go into all the world." Do not many of us say, "Come into our nice little meeting-house and take a sitting in front of the gallery"? Let every man answer for himself.

TEACHERS.

I distinguish broadly between preachers and teachers. The latter we shall always need. Of well-equipped teachers we can hardly have too many. The coming century will be impatient with incompetent teachers; but the very degree of its impatience, on the one hand, will be the degree of its appreciation on the other. Men do willing homage to the teachers who can bring them within clear sight of all the kingdoms of God—Righteousness, Purity, Music Beauty, and Eternal Love.

CHURCHES.

As to churches, a wonderful change will take place. Little Bethels and Zions, "born to blush unseen," will be swept off the face of the earth. Small tests of faith, sectarian standards of orthodoxy, pedantries, whims, and theological crazes will all disappear, and men will gather in adoring love around the Christ of God. There will be a grand Church, then! In that holy day opinion will be nothing accounted of compared with sincere love and passionate devotion to the service of the poor, the weak, and the weary, who need a word in season. In that day men will not know that there ever was so great an anomaly as a State Church. The buttress of the State will have been displaced by the unseen arm of the living God, and outward glitter will disappear under the dawning and brightening radiance of spiritual beauty and loveliness. The Church of the triumphant Saviour will in very deed be established, for she shall have granite for her foundations and salvation for her walls.

The great freedom which is coming upon all sections of the one Church will not be the freedom of wanton and riotous license. It will be the freedom of eternal law—the law which makes astronomic music and keeps the oceans within their appointed lines. We must set our faces as a flint against the crime of violating, even in vain attempt, the solemn and rhythmic order of God.

PROFESSIONALISM.

In the twentieth century the Christian conception of thought and service will be cleansed of every taint of professionalism. The taint is indeed foul and mischievous. Many of the old heresies would pass out of the mind of the world if men were not professionally engaged in keeping them green and blooming by constant watering. From every point of view, this is vanity and vexation of spirit. It is unspeakably sad to see men taking long journeys to the cemeteries of the opening Christian centuries, exhuming putrescent heretics, making their ghastly jaws repeat their fœtid commonplaces, then argumentatively slapping their faces and putting them back in their antiquated shrouds. It is a hideous way of getting a living. Let the dead bury their dead. Leaving the things that are behind, let us, for Christ's dear sake, press to the arms He opens for us. The twentieth century will want to know the present truth, and not to hear the lies men used to tell two thousand years ago.

POLITICS.

Politically, what changes will take place ere the close of the twentieth century! The Ecclesiastical Commissioners will all be paid off, and their millions have gone to the reduction of the National Debt. Leaseholds will have become freeholds. The land will be no longer the monopoly of men who never paid for it. Men will not be great by title but by character. He who does most good will be crowned as the king of men. The House of Commons will consist of five-and-twenty members, and the House of Lords of six referees. Vestry locusts and County Council vampires will have died of starvation, and been buried "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung." The tax-gatherer will no longer be a shadow on the door-step, but the welcome presence of an honest messenger sent by honest neighbours.

THE PUBLIC-HOUSE.

And the public-house, where will that be? It will be burned with fire and brimstone. It was built by the devil, and to the devil it will go. The public-house is the gate to hell. Who can write the story of the ruin it has wrought? Oh, the misery, the heart-break, the desolation, the orphanhood, the murder, the suicide, the madness, for which that accursed house is responsible! But the twentieth century will see the passing away of the chief tragedy of perdition. In fancy's quick, glad hearing I catch the sound of all the distilleries, breweries, drunkeries, falling in one terrific crash;

whilst there goes up to heaven the thrilling shout, "The house of Bacchus—that street-corner god of London—has fallen into hell!"

SCIENCE.

Science will be no longer hostile to religion, nor religion hostile to science. There never should have been any controversy between them. The God of the Bible is the God of Nature. He planted the forests, and breathed the life, and moulded the stars, and made the whole house we live in. He that built all things is God. Religion may have to change her forms and her way of putting things, but not her reverence for God or her glad obedience to His will. So long as the sky is above the earth man will need religious expressions of word and service for his highest nature and his noblest impulses. Little Dogma must give way to immeasurable Truth, stunted Creed must make room for majestic and increasing Faith, and shrunken Self must yield to the diviner claims of Man.

LITERATURE.

In literature, authors will be paid and publishers well rewarded. A ghastly Paternoster Row skeleton will no longer go up and down amongst the poorer ministers, asking them to write gratuitously for his magazine on the ground that they may be doing more good than they are aware of. What a benevolent skeleton! What a religiously-disposed rhinoceros! All this miserable knavery will be scorned out of existence, and honest labour will be liberally rewarded. This state of things is being rapidly brought about now. Periodical writers are often paid with a liberal hand.

PUBLIC COMPANIES.

The twentieth century will see a great change in the matter of public companies. They are, one and all, so far as I have seen the prospectuses, cunningly-plotted swindles. I make no reference to private companies. I refer to companies got up by company-promoters. Who can tell the misery consequent upon the Liberator swindle? Every man connected with that business ought, in my opinion, to be publicly flogged. No punishment could equal the crime. I say this as a minister who knows family sorrows hereby occasioned too dreadful to be expressed in words.

WOMEN.

The position of woman in the twentieth century will be in happy contrast to that which she now occupies. It is now customary on the part of weak men to lower the conversation so as to bring it within the feminine capacity. I have been immensely amused by the superhuman condescension of sundry masculine idiots. The moment a lady enters the room the subject drops from even a very moderate intellectual level to the baby, the weather, the crops, and the newest thing in umbrellas. There is a softened murmur of maudlin consolation in respect of rheumatism, and a feebly energetic protest against any woman caring, or daring, to have an opinion of her own. Recent University successes have shown that women can go to the top without losing one atom of grace or gentleness, of simplicity or child-likeness, of sympathy or affection. All that has been taken away from the region of fancy, and squarely settled down in the region of indisputable fact. It must be very humbling to men of a certain cast of mind to know that girls take the B. A. degree in dozens and scores, and never stoop to wear the elementary and now humiliating decoration. But what are third-class men to think of girls who know mathematics and natural philosophy enough to build the Forth Bridge, and yet can laugh, and dance, and joke, and even take a hand in the kitchen?

CONCLUSION.

I congratulate the men who will live far into the new century. I would I were just now beginning my ministry if I could begin it with my present experience. Shall we see things on earth from our spheres beyond the death-line? Shall we be permitted to see how silver comes instead of iron, and gold instead of silver? We shall soon know. The sun-set of this century is the sunrise of the next. Let us more and more confidently hope in the Living God.

NOTE XLV.

I FEEL that the argument for a State Church has not been stated as forcibly as it might have been, and I am quite sure that Nonconformists do not realise the argument which they have to answer. Nonconformist and Dissenter are two very different terms. John Wesley was a Nonconformist, but he did not oppose a State Church. Church and State are the principal words in the argument, but it is often forgotten that they are words of changeable meaning. The word "State" has undergone a great change; it is now an almost religious term. What with its taking up such work as education, temperance, thrift, arbitration, care of the aged poor, and emigration, it is a most domestic and true friend. The State is not now merely a taxing-machine; it is the guardian and friend of moral progress. The Church, too, is not what it once was; it is self-reformed—it begins to understand the age. When it de-feudalises and de-Romanises its Prayer-Book, and when its bishops cease to be lords of the realm, that they may become the fathers and pastors of the people, it need not trouble itself about disestablishment; that question is entirely in the hands of the Church itself. Less lord and more Lord, and the Church cannot be injured; less priest and more pastor, and the Church is safe. The

Church should recognise that an intelligent and earnest Nonconformity is one of its best friends, because it is critical, emulous, and suggestive. He is in the Apostolic succession who inherits the Apostolic spirit, and who lovingly undertakes Apostolic work. Apostolicity is not an order; it is a spirit.

Nonconformists will never accept public money for spiritual service, because they believe that Christian love should pay for all such service. Why not take public money for service rendered to the State? There are recognised "temporalities" even in religious work, why should not the State help all Christian communions in that direction? Sites have to be purchased, buildings to be erected, leases to be renewed, dilapidations to be made good, and the poor to be helped. I distinguish between State patronage and State gratitude. The Churches are the best soldiers, the best policemen, and the best financial securities of the nation. The State is therefore deeply indebted to the Churches, and should appropriately recognise its obligations. As to State control, all churches have it: they are exempted from rates and taxes; they are licensed for marriages; they are debarred from commerce; they must keep their doors open during public service; when disputes arise respecting theological trust-deeds, those deeds must be interpreted and determined by legal tribunals; and when marriages are solemnised the agent of the State is indispensable. Talk about State control! There it is.

As to the rot that is talked about Henry VIII. being head of the Church and Charles I. being head of the Church, it is not true. It is not the *man;* it is the *King* that is head of the Church. There are bad Dissenting ministers as well as bad Romish popes, but they do not destroy the character, the dignity, or the true succession of the ministry.

A State Church should provide for Nonconformity, and should never account Nonconformity a crime or a heresy.

Has the complicated but responsible unit called the *State* the right to elect a religion?

That is the vital question. If it has such a right, all else is mere matter of detail. If it has not, then disestablishment becomes an immediate and most urgent duty.

NOTE XLVI.

It is quite an awful thing to have an ambition which you cannot realise, and which you dare not breathe to your dearest friend. You shut yourself up like Archimedes, and brood upon it, and are quite sure that to-morrow you will be running out in your night-shirt, screaming "Eureka!" and yet that morrow recedes from you like the horizon: you think you have it now, and lo! the bubble has only damped the hand that snatched it. It is a new principle you are in search of—a new way of doing things—telegraphing without wires; communicating with the Antipodes without mechanism; seeing without eyes, and little efforts of that sort; and in your own secret soul you think it can be done if you apply your mind to it. You apply your mind to it, but nothing rewards your pious industry. It is as bad as having an unproved earldom in the family. You are sure you are an earl, and that you ought to be in possession of ten thousand acres in each of ten counties, and the only thing that lies between you and success is one bit of official paper—say a birth register or a marriage certificate. I am so glad there is no disputed earldom in our family, for I can get to work in an honest way, and pick up an honest livelihood. If any man tells you that you are an earl, poison him. My father was potentially present in the Garden of Eden; but I say nothing about it, as I have no wish to discourage the rest of the human family.

Why does one man succeed and another fail? I don't know. As a rule, good work brings good success, but not always so. Many men work hard, but they work at the wrong end; many men apparently do nothing and get everything; other men are ruined by going in quest of the philosopher's stone. I have an idea that I am just on the point of discovering something that will turn the world black and blue with surprise, but that idea yields me no income at present. I think it has something to do with telepathy, and with so affecting the minds of millionaires that they will provide for my old age. That is exactly where many men get wrong: they dream more than they work. Some of my brethren say I have been a lucky man. I not only deny the suggestion; I denounce it. God has enabled me to take everything I have by hard work—I am in very deed a hard-working man. Whatever I can do, I can do at once; if it is beyond me, I never attempt it. I have no arrears; all my letters are answered by the first post. If an editor wants an article from my pen, he has it in two hours, though it be two columns long. To luck I owe nothing; to hard work I owe everything. By rising at seven, reading the papers at half-past, breakfasting at eight, avoiding all animal food after two, and sleeping on porridge and milk, I can work with pleasure. I owe a great deal to my *not* moving resolutions at public meetings. What piles of forgotten and worthless resolutions some people have moved! It is most sad, most melancholy. I hear of such men that they are better on the platform than in the pulpit. Could a deadlier accusation be brought against them! Poor old Exeter Hall! what a cemetery of resolutions! What an Aceldama of rhetoricians! How falsehood has revelled and sweltered in that chilling morgue—the falsehood of exaggerated emotion, the pretence of patriotism, the simulation of extemporaneouness, the counterfest of Catholicity! Talk of shipwrecks, explosions, collisions, eruptions, and conflagrations, go to Exeter Hall!

If I owe nothing to laziness, I owe less than nothing to patronage. This I have already pointed out, and I point it out again for the encouragement of men who are cursed with any degree of individuality. To all such men I would say, If you want to escape hardship, poison yourselves at once. Never forget, however, that God reigns, and that His election will stand sure. Be at peace with God, and He will handle your enemies. He will raise up strong men to comfort you, and He will find for you pools of water and combs of honey in unexpected places. In my own struggling and battered life I see the very face of God, and I gladly live to help the children of those who spake kindly to me in the valley and in the night.

NOTE XLVII.

HARTFORD, Conn., is a lovely city in point of environment, and lovelier still in point of association. It is the city of Bushnell, the theologian; Mark Twain, the humourist; and Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," not to mention others of more than local fame. As our time in the city was short, we had to make the most of it; so, very soon after locating ourselves at the hotel, we drove off to see the famous sister of our revered Henry Ward Beecher. We were enchanted with the route, so many, so handsome, and so hospitable-looking were the villas and mansions, whose open gardens gave the whole scene so park-like an aspect. Halt! this is the place we want—no, not this very fine house—the humbler-looking dwelling next door; mark, not humble-looking, but humbler-looking, because this one is so very rich and stylish.

It was interesting to have the door of such a house opened by none other than a genuine negress. This was in keeping with the fitness of things. The happy-looking servant might have been expecting us for the last six months, so broad and vivid was the smile with which she greeted us.

"Mrs. Stowe at home?" my wife inquired.

"I think not, ma'am; I will look, if you will wait."

On returning to the door (she did not ask us in), she said:

"Can't be found, ma'am. The old lady wanders about by herself miles and miles, and nobody knows where she is; 'spects she's in the woods somewheres."

It would have been difficult for an English servant to call her mistress "the old lady" without being rude; but there was no hint of rudeness in the gentle tone of the negress. It seemed as if she were giving Mrs. Stowe quite a high title, and paying due respect to the family escutcheon.

"We'll call again in the morning," we said; and were instantly assured that we should have a hearty welcome, and that "the old lady" should wait for us.

That negress was a gentle despot.

Morning came, and off we were driven by the kindest of friends (who had made our acquaintance at the City Temple) to try our luck once more. The door was opened quite widely—a significant act—and the smiling negress simply said "All right," as if in long-established confidence. We seemed to have known that negress a long time.

"The room on the right," she said, leaving us to ourselves for a few moments.

"What a lovely home!" was our suppressed exclamation.

Room opened into room, every window looking upon trees and flowers and far-off undulations. It was like a bird's-nest, amidst all those lacing twigs and branches, and the countless shadows flung by the light of that cloudless autumn morning. Every table was loaded with books; the walls were rich with pictures, etchings, and engravings, and every little corner had its own fragrant nosegay. Without the faintest sense of grandeur, there was everywhere an assurance of elegance and comfort. It was the home of a poet. It seemed as if anybody could write a novel who lived in that mossy summer-house, and if a novel at all, how beautiful a novel it must have been! Without opening of doors, or sound of approach, there she stood. She might have oozed in, or been dropped out of the warm breeze, or wafted from the nearest clump of flowers, for without sound, or noise, or rush, there she was—there, shaking hands with us, was Harriet Beecher Stowe.

"How very small she is!" was my mental exclamation. Why, she was only one of the flowers! Small, but not dwarfish; she was complete; yes, there was little of her, but it was all that Nature meant her to be. It seemed as if Nature wanted some one just that size, and made her just so. Nature pleased herself in that comely miniature. But the voice! how rich, how soft, how full! There was nothing of loudness or domineering, yet we felt we must listen to it for the sake of its comforting music. Mr. Gladstone's conversational voice is of the same quality, and therefore it produces the same effects. Her talk was no taller than herself, and it was about herself, though without egotism. She was sorry she was out yesterday when we called. She spent most of her time out of doors. She walked about by herself a good deal, yet never felt lonely. Was she writing anything now?

"No" (smiling), "not for the public; only letters to her friends."

Then, without explanation, she would walk out of the room and come back again under the fold of some curtain we had not noticed. When we rose to go she kissed my wife, and added, with a look in my direction:

"I don't kiss gentlemen."

That was my opportunity.

"No," said I, "that may be true; but that need not hinder you from giving me your autograph."

In a moment she went out of the room, and stayed out full five minutes. During these minutes we could not but again notice the tranquillity of the whole scene. Not an external sound was heard. The rich light was broken by the trees and shrubs. The soft tick of an unseen clock was as the presence of a sleeping child. What the dear old lady brought back and gave me with her gentle hand was in sweet harmony with the Sabbatic calm;

"He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.

"HARRIET BEECHER STOWE."

This brought with it a light above the brightness of the sun, and in that high light we parted from the woman whose fame had filled the world.

Yes, parted from her, but only to hear something more about her. Our second call was upon her next-door neighbour, none other than Mark Twain.

Of all the houses I have ever seen, Mark Twain's is the most charming—not the grandest, not the most dollarish, not the most showy, but the exact contrary. Elegance and simplicity culminated in Mark Twain's house. The difficulty is that, having got into it, you don't want to come out of it again. Here, also, you have room opening out of room in apparently endless succession. Yonder a touch of colour, yonder a corner of a conservatory, yonder the outline of a library, the walls alive with art, the whole bathed in September sunlight. And here is Mark himself, and here is Mrs. Mark, both as genial as the morning, both most hospitable and welcoming.

The conversation was long and varied. If I added that it was lit up with stories of all sorts, I should be strictly within the line of fact. Mrs. Stowe is permitted to use Mark Twain's garden as if it were her own. She goes in and out when she pleases, and cuts what flowers she likes. So we had heard.

"Is that a fact, Mr. Clemens?"

"Well," said Mark drawlingly and smilingly, "it is. The only man who objects to it is John."

"John?" said I.

"Yes. Well, now, I tell you," he continued; "John is a heaven-born undertaker in his manner. Not a retail undertaker, who smiles and fawns on you in the hope that one day he may have the burying of you; but a regular state-endowed undertaker whose position is assured, and who can therefore afford to snub you. John don't like it."

"Why not?" we asked.

"Wa—al, because John has his pet flowers that he wants to keep, and the old lady snips them off as if they had not cost John a thought. But one day John got the better of her. The old lady was in the conservatory, and thinking perhaps to propitiate John, she quietly asked, 'Have you ever read "Uncle Tom's Cabin"?' And John turned upon her in his best undertaker manner, and looked down from a great height, and then said, '*Tried to,*' and left her. Now," said Mark, after we had laughed, "it will never be known in this world whether John knew exactly what he was saying, and was thus intentionally rude, or whether he was unconscious of having given the most withering criticism ever addressed to an author."

This is my recollection of a sunny morning. I thought I would set it down here in the hope that somebody would like to share it with me.

NOTE XLVIII.

I SUPPOSE I am mortal. In the course of my walks I see not a few just like myself lying dead and unburied, so I feel that my fate will be just like theirs some day. I live in a large place—a place so vast that I cannot tell its size. It is too much for me. To think of it makes my poor head spin round and round until I feel as if I must fall, and if I do fall I am sure I shall rise no more. I hope I may not fall.

What I see in my place and from my place no words can tell. No foot of man has come near my home. All round about it there are caves and shadows and awful pits. In the midst of my place there is a mystery which might well drive me mad. It is full of light and heat. It glows and flames and shines like the sun at noon. It would blind me if I went too near. I shake with fright when that glare fills the whole space with fire. I think it must be so many miles away that no one could so much as dream.

From the space below I often hear a noise of steel clashing against steel as if secret murder were being done. It is awful to think of. I look, but dare not stir. Then high words are heard, and bells ring, and a loud laugh as of unholy joy fills all the boundless space. Presently the great fires are put out as in a moment, and a horrible darkness settles on the scene of strife. I dare not move. I live on the edge of a pit. By-and-by, after long waiting, there comes a creak, a crash, a flame, and I peep forth to behold a red wrath, a gloomy smoke, and a movement as of living things in great haste.

Oh, the vastness of the space! Oh, the loneliness of the spot I fill! Sometimes great eyes are turned towards me, as if my presence were hateful. They must be angels. The figures are so vast. The figures are so grand. The figures look to be so strong. I am filled with wonder. I am the only intelligent thing that lives. There is other life in great abundance, but it is not of my quality; I only can truly think, observe, calculate, and forecast. In a sense I am the whole. Other things, other lives, are part of me. I wish they could see things as I do. For their sakes I wish they lived up here. I pity their poor lot, yet I cannot raise them to my level.

The speaker in this parable is a common FLY walking on the ceiling of my dining-room. Do not laugh at the poor FLY. It is thus men talk from their little perches of knowledge. The fly thinks the ceiling infinite. The fly is dazzled by the gasalier in the middle of the ceiling. The fly quakes when he hears the murderous sound of knives and forks in the feast of hospitality. How much wiser are we? What do we know of the Infinite? Better say with Paul, "We know in part." That is enough just now. Do not let us trespass upon the secrecy of God. Let us pray and serve, and love and *wait*.

FINAL NOTE.

As I look back, I throw my musing into this weird shape of words:

I began the world as you, as all, in wonder.
It was a great world—measureless, thund'rous—
In which I wakened from immemorial sleep.
My memories are blurred like an incongruous dream,
Yet I hear and see a thousand things—nameless, tender—
Which happened in my dawn.
"Baby" they called me—always Baby, Baby, Baby;
And when they called me Baby they smiled and cooed,
And dived at me with various assault.
In tones full of meaning, but void of sense, they
Cooed and babbled all the day, while I answered
In vacant looks, and clutched with aimless determination.
They did not make me like themselves; I made them, like me,
All babies, the whole house a nursery, the old man a little child.
Every woman knew me; every ten-year-old wanted to nurse me.

For father, mother, there was no outer world, no
change of weather,
No tempting bargains, no up and down of foreign
stocks;
For sun, moon, and stars, for all the annual seasons,
For gold and gems—they looked in baby's crib and
found them all.
When I first said "Mamma!" ten letters told ten
distant friends
The astounding miracle.
When my first tooth came, everybody must needs
know it,
Feel it, attest it, and tell how twenty other well-known babies
Had grown that very same tooth in that very same
place.
Ere he had quite crossed the threshold, the doctor
was told
That baby had cut a tooth, whereon he prophesied
That other teeth might be reasonably expected.
The doctor, honest as an oak, was yet a wily
man;
He told my mother—willing listener—that on the
whole
I was the fairest baby he had ever handled—so
plump,
So shapely, and for my minutes the tallest baby he
had ever seen.
To full twenty mothers near by he had lied identically—
Innocently lied—for the kind doctor was forgetful
of details.

What the doctor said the mother said, and asked to show
My "tootsy-peg," and said "Toofy, toofy—baby dot a toofy."
And when I smiled, she said, "Toofy, toofy, bless him den!
Did baby get a ickle toofy?"
My father pooh-poohed such stuff, called the doctor names,
And told my mother she would put an end to me by suffocation.
Yet, no one near and the door well closed,
I heard that grim judge say, "Toofy, toofy, den! Did my
Baby have a ickle toofy?" When the door softly opened,
He told my mother that baby had been coughing.

. . . . .

Ah me! my heart loses half its heat
As the dreams and spectres seize me
With spiritual violence. Could the dear souls
Have known all that was coming on them,
How would they have treated baby?
Would love by accident have found a grave for me?
Would they have asked God to take me back again?
Or would they have dared the ominous revelation,
Seeing with love's eyes Christ's rainbow
Beyond the storm?

Well, what of it all? Is life worth living? A good deal depends upon whether you have, in the largest and best meaning of the term, any sense of humour. Life without humour is a most gloomy and dispiriting experiment. The worst of it is that so few people know the meaning of humour; they think it is joking, or buffoonery, or forced laughter, whereas it is pathos, sympathy, and faculty of optimistic interpretation. But very few people know the real meaning even of prayer; they think it is religious begging, a daily quest of alms, another venture in self-aggrandisement, whereas it is worship, communion, aspiration, poetry, a plunging of the soul in the ocean of infinite love. You may ask nothing and yet get all things.

Now that I look back upon the "great and terrible wilderness" of earthly life, it would be an intolerable pain to live but for one's vivid perception of the spiritual ministry by which all things are ruled and shaped. I believe in God. As to Providence—a sweet, housewifely, and most comfortable word—I have no more doubt than I have of the sun or the earth which he generously warms. As to Providence, my own life is the daily proof. Of course Providence takes no heed of my personal conceits and desires and narrow preferences. Providence returns my prayers, contradicts my will, mocks my ambitions, and digs graves in my garden. I know it, yet my heart praises the living God, and knows Him to be near at hand. I thought I could have managed some things better than they are managed, but I have lived to see what a fool I was when I thought so. I can now thank God for events which once broke my heart. We are apt to look at events singly and separately, and to say, in peevish unbelief, "Can there be a God in heaven?" By-and-by we come to put events together, to mass them and shape them and set them in proper relation and perspective, and then they assume their intended meaning, and we see it, and gratefully sing a song unto the Lord. Even Moses, sternest of rulers, the embodied conscience of his villainous followers, once sang—perhaps only once—such a man could not sing often—and that song was over the drowned chariots and horses of Egypt. So it has been even in my own little way. God has handled my enemies for me. They meant to kill me, to starve me, to cover me with odium; but God undertook my cause, and by His goodness I have this day bread enough and to spare. We should never forget how much we owe to our enemies. In one aspect they may be our best friends; undoubtedly that is so in my own case. My books, some forty in number, had never been written had I been a more clubable man; so if they have done any good, let the unwilling and unsuspected service of the enemy be duly recognised. I thank God for solitude. We meet angels on the lonely road. Now that it is not in the power of any man to help me, now that I have more than I want, I lovingly remember all who helped me in the struggle, and lent me a light in the darkness, and as for those who waited for my halting, I forget their names and their designs.

Do not undervalue the educative influence of your hardships; God meant them for your good. I may perhaps go farther, and say that God sent them to you, and directed the whole method of the attack. I believe that there is a very real and intelligible sense in which the devil is a servant of God. I am quite certain, too, that a man's opponents are not necessarily bad men even in doing bad deeds. We must discriminate. "On some have compassion, making a difference." They may think they are right. "They know not what they do." I have known an instance in which a bitter enemy said to a brother minister, "We have done you great injustice." It was a noble sentiment, nobly uttered, and reconciliation instantly took place. Never be ashamed to tell a man that you have wronged him; rather be ashamed if you do not tell him. And if you have been wronged, go and tell your brother his fault between you and him alone. Who knows but he may hear you, and repent his deed? I have often thought that the hardships I have had to endure were so many punishments for my sins. An insult may be a judgment; a neglect may be the shadow of some unholy thought. Why did they withhold such and such an honour from me? Perhaps because I have failed in duty, or grieved the Holy Spirit. When I talk so to myself, I feel that repentance is the forerunner of restoration.

We should have no time to offend and grieve one another; we should be too busy doing good to have any time to annoy. It may be difficult to avoid giving offence to some people, on account of their morbid sensitiveness, yet who can tell how that sensitiveness may have been brought about? Who knows all the subtleties of disease? Our very health may be the veil of diseases that do not affect the flesh. What room, then, for gentle charity and for patient hope! "The servant of the lord must not strive." We need not, indeed, insist on having our very rights; we may concede without loss; we may surrender and win.

Looking over all the scenes that have passed before me in these notes, I see how some persons may be baffled by what to them is frivolity. There is nothing frivolous to me in any of them. Oscillation is part of the mystery of life. It may be a defect to have so keen an appreciation of comedy, yet in it there is an element of youthfulness—an element, indeed, which guarantees a permanent overflow of spirits. Even in bishops I have seen phases of comedy, and not the less so in the very moments when they were most fussily guarding their lawn from social criticism. When a bishop is very big—I mean dropsically and timidly big—he is the most comical of living things. When he is simple, gentle, sympathetic, with healing in the very hem of his lawn, he moves me to reverence and trust and love. All the comical things I have related have passed before me in some form or other. I have seen them; they have laughed in my hearing; they have played shadow-games on the walls of my chamber. In this sense, when I have been most alone I have been least alone. These shadow-folks have taken from me many a pain, and spread for me many a festival, and spoken to me of the morrow that is to be so bright and so long. Laughter is one of heaven's own children.

I make no apology for having so freely used the potential mood. I wanted some things to be, and therefore I have spoken of them as if they actually were. They would have helped me so much, and they would have made me so glad; they would have been fountains in dry places, and flowers growing in the desert, and infinitely beyond me and any other individual man, they would have given the kind of comfort which is born of renewed courage. If men can prophesy in the indicative mood, why may they not review in the potential mood? It is no idle exercise, for it may suggest what may yet be done by showing what might have been in the yesterdays not yet forgotten. What may yet be done! There's a field! We must be led by prophets, not by speculators, by men who inwardly see, and not by men who take their luck from a box of dice. If we believe the Bible, we can have no difficulty in accepting the ministry of prophecy. To certain minds God has entrusted His "secret" in all ages, and that "secret" has been the known, yet unknown, quantity in all civilisation and progress. Even prophets may not be able to explain their own words, and others may regard those words as babble, or as the fumes of new wine. When was a true apostle of the kingdom ever really understood? When was true inspiration ever bound in the fetters of literature? We may have had literature enough; what if we now pray vehemently for the ministry that lies far beyond pen and ink? We have treated education; we have treated the earth we live on; we have fixed a North Pole we cannot get at, and a South Pole we could not live at; and, having drawn a body-line round the globe, we have come to suppose that the equator had a Divine origin. We have tenemented the globe into countries, each with its own little patriotisms, and into parishes, each with its own local prejudice. We have lost the integer, and cannot get the fractions to shape themselves into the lost whole number. What we want is the living God, with the all-day breeze of His quickening Spirit.

The great blue sky of summer makes God *possible;* the wonders that sky works yearly on the earth makes God *actual.* If a rose-leaf can come out of the cold, black earth, there need be no difficulty about the Resurrection. The star-lit sky of wintry nights always speaks to me of Destiny. There is room enough for us all up there—thousands upon thousands of star-galleries; think of them as temples for the true and holy—homes where there shall be no more sighing or crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away. Here and now it is nothing but farewell; the last lingering look; the grip that kills the very heart it meant to bless; the love-token that seals the unbroken covenant of sacred devotion—

that is the heart-breaking now. But close at hand is the other world and better, where the flowers fade not, and the service is of song and festival. We need that other world if we would escape despair in the world that now is. I will not think of my dear ones as dead ; they cannot be dead who fell asleep in Christ. They told me that Christ was with them ; they said they saw His dear face ; they pledged me in His dear Name to meet them in heaven's morning, and in the sweet bitterness of my sorrow, I took oath to that effect. Then how poor the earth became, and how Time shrank into a moment! We are the richer for witnessing such dying—the tenderer, the wholesomer, in all the springs and outlets of life. Who can come away from his child's grave to renew a feud or gratify a passion? He comes, rather, with a cleansed and forgiving heart—yea, he longs and yearns to forgive, that he may be nearer his ascended child.

Farewell.

Pity me wherein I have done amiss.

If I have been hard upon any good man, God forgive me!

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